

PRACTICAL
DISCOURSES
Upon several
Divine Subjects.

VOL. IV.

Of Religious Discourse in Common Conversation.

Of the Fear of Death.

Concerning the Extent of Christ's Satisfaction.

Concerning Practical Atheism.

Of Walking by Faith.

Concerning Charity to the Poor.

Concerning the Right Use of the World.

Concerning the Successive Vanity of Human Life.

Written by JOHN NORRIS, M. A.
Rector of Bemerton near Sarum.

THE FIFTEENTH EDITION.



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23012313

To my very Worthy and much
Honour'd Friends,

Mrs. Eliz. Cabel,

A N D

Mrs. Mary Prowse.

GI VE me Leave, Good Ladies, to
adorn a Book, (that does not in-
deed deserve the Honour of such
a Patronage) with the *Inscription*
of those Recommending Names, which near
Relation and a very Excelling Worth have
Combined to indear to me. I have been
hitherto paying my Addresses abroad, and
now, like one that has been Travelling some
while in Foreign Parts, find an Inclination
to make a Visit nearer Home, but I do not
direct these Papers to you so much for your
Improvement either in Knowledge, or in
Life and Practice, as to satisfie my own Ob-
ligations, and to discharge a Debt of Honour
and Gratitude. Nor indeed can I hope to
make you much *Wiser*, or much *Better* by
any thing that is here offer'd. Your emi-
nent and exemplary Practice of your Duty
shews that you well understand it, and all that

A a a a 2

have

The Epistle Dedicatory.

have the Happiness of your Acquaintance
Know that you *Live* every day better Ser-
mons than I can *Preach*. And I heartily wish
we had more such bright Examples of Piety,
and living Systems of Morality to give Light
and Warmth to a Benighted and Frozen
Age, and that the rest of the World were
but as well inlightned as that *Sphere* is where-
in you move. But you would much rather
your Light should shine out from you, than
be return'd back to you. I must not there-
fore *Commend* you, any more than I need *In-*
struct you. I pretend indeed to do neither, but
only send these Papers by way of Respect
and Civility to wait on you; and if you please
to receive them, or shall think them worthy
to make any part of the Furniture of your
Closets, or of the Entertainment of your va-
cant Hours, the Honour will be equal to the
Ambition, and beyond the Deserts of,

LADIES,

Your Most Affectionate Kinsman, and

Most Obliged and Humble Servant,

J. Norris.

THE
PREFACE
TO THE
READER.

BEING Willing to be as Serviceable to the Publick as the Measure of my Understanding, Health, Leisure and other Opportunities and Advantages will allow, I continue to Communicate to the World some more of such Practical Discourses as I have Composed upon particular Occasions, and with more than ordinary Care, because I do upon due Consideration verily believe they may (with all their Defects) be in some measure useful, and do good to those who shall Considerately and with Christian Candour peruse them. And if they have that effect, whatever they may be thought of in other respects, I shall not lose my Aim, any more than my Reader his Labour; for the Success of which I would have him give to God (not to me) the Glory. For I know of none that is due to me, or any other Creature, nor would I therefore assume or pretend to any, but desire to be Content that He in whose Divine Light I see, by whose Grace I am what I am, and by whose Power and Might I

do

do what I do, should have All. This I take to be the great Rule which all Writers should propose to themselves, and which accordingly I desire to propose in all that I Write: Nor would I own anything for Mine wherein I either have or Might be justly Supposed to have transgressed it.

I Know not Whether I have met with any thing that has struck me more Sensibly, or made a quicker Impression upon my Spirit than a certain Reflection which the Port R. has upon Our Saviour's Writing upon the Ground, when the Woman taken in Adultery was Accused before him. Jesus Christ (says the Evangelical Moralist) 1. Never wrote but once in his Life. 2. And then too but upon the Dust. 3. And only to Evade the Condemning of a Sinner. 4. And he would not have what he had Writ to be Known. Thereby instructing us not to Write but out of Necessity, or for Profit, but with Humility, and Modesty, and Charity. Jesus writ his Divine Thoughts upon the Dust, and we would have Ours should be Written upon Cedar, and Graven upon Brads. 'Tis indeed most Certain that the Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of Humility, and I do not Know whether next to the amazing instance of his Incarnation and Humiliation upon the Cross, he has given a greater Example of it than in not Writing. That one who was personally united to the Eternal, and Substantial Word and Wisdom

*Abregé de la Morale
de L'Evangile. Tom.
2. p. 589.*

dom of God, and had the Communications of his Divine Spirit without Measure, that Knew so much of the Intellectual World, and could have reveal'd so many Sublime Truths if he had pleas'd, and that without the Labour and Fatigue of Study or Thinking, with as much Ease and Dispatch as 'twas once Say'd, Let there be Light, and there was Light; That a Person of such Eminence and Ability should be Content Privately to enjoy the Shine of so Glorious a Day-Spring from on High, and Keep his great and profound Thoughts to himself, without making any Show or Discovery of his Divine Gifts any further than was absolutely requisite to the Discharge of his Mission, and the Necessary Instruction of the World, and even here too should take the most Natural and unaffected Method, delivering his Doctrine as he did his Miracles Occasionally and en Passant, dropping his Divine Sentences by word of Mouth among those with whom he happen'd to Converse, without the Solemnyty of Writing, or the Formality of Set Composures: I say, the Consideration of this strange Reserve, tho' it does not absolutely Condemn Writing Books, yet I think will not have its due Use if not improv'd as a Caution to all Christian Writers how they write for Fame and not for Conscience, and regard any other end but the Glory of God, and the Edification of their Brethren.

As for the latter of these Ends I think there was never more need of Consulting it than now. Not so much for the Improvement of Mens Understandings

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derstandings (which indeed in this Age are arrived to a wonderful Fineness and Justness of thinking) as for the Direction of their Wills and Affections, and the Regulation of Common Life and Practice, which indeed is now Sunk as low, as the other is rais'd and exalted. The State of Religion and the State of Learning seem to stand at present like the two Poles of the Earth, one Elevated and the other Depressed. The Truth is (tho' it be a sad one) Fineness and Irreligion make the Character of this Age, which has no Heat with its Light; but while it Shines bright and radiant, feels Cold and Frozen, and with all the gay Appearances of Life, has the Chillness of Death upon it. Thou hast a Name that thou livest, and art Dead, Rev. 3. 1. Which plainly Shews that the latter Days are come upon us, whereof there is this double Character, that Knowledge shall increase, but the Love of many shall wax Cold.

Religion indeed is now become little more than Theory, Contention, Profession, and Form. Learned Men Study it, those that would be Infidels dispute and cavil about it, Civil Men profess it, Politic Men and Hypocrites make a great Shew and Ostentation of it, but who is it that Sincerely and Conscientiously practises it and lives by its Measures. For besides that the Fundamental Suppositions of all Religion have been of late very much undermin'd by the loose Principles of Deism and Libertinism, Men are generally grown (even those who are Sound enough in those

Fundamentals)

Fundamental Suppositions) into a Strange Carelessness, and Sottish Indifference about their Salvation; and though they pretend to believe another World, seem yet wholly unconcerned how they shall speed in it. In so much that I know not whether there be any thing in the whole World that is Neglected so much. However I think this I may safely and freely say, after a Writer of no ordinary Genius and Observation, that should a Christian be in his other Affair as he is in relation to his Salvation, the World would not indure him, he would pass for a very Fool. So gross is the Carelessness of Men in this grand Point, but the unhappiness of it is that (as the same Acute Author observes) all that which is blamed in other Matters, is excused in the matter of Religion, and that 'tis only in the Affair of Salvation that Men have a Toleration for their Imprudencies, and may with the World's good leave be Fools.

The great Difference among Christians lies in the diversity of their Opinions, their Lives (for ought I see) are much at one rate, let their Principles be what they will. Those that hold the Truth of Religion, live generally as they would do in the Contrary Hypothesis, and those that hold Religion in its Truth and Purity live however according to the Measures of Error and Heresy: In this unhappy Point the most different Parties meet, and whatever their Faith may be, their Lives for

Pensees &c. Réflexions sur les
égaremens des
Hommes, dans
la voie du Salut. Tom. 1. p.
126.

The P R E F A C E

the most part are not Christian, nor such as will in the End bring them to Happiness; unless the way thither be much Wider than our Saviour assures us it is. Nay, if there be any Truth in that Religion which they profess they cannot expect after such Lives any better Portion than a Miserable Eternity, and yet (which is a strange thing) Happiness, and that Eternal, is the thing that they propose to themselves all this while, as the great end of their Hopes, and aim of their Endeavours, and if any one that met them upon the Road of Life should ask them whither they were travelling, they would say without doubt, for Heaven. But can they think that the Common way of Living will ever bring them thither? Strange Folly and Presumption after a few Days so indifferently at least, if not ill Spent upon Earth, to hope hereafter for Heaven! I Know not which is the greater Sottishness in Men to take so little Care for their Salvation, or to think that that little will do.

But how shall we awaken Men from this dead Sleep, bring them to themselves, and recover them into their Senses? Nothing I Confess so hard as to reclaim a Vicious and Knowing Age. Immorality that proceeds from Ignorance and Darkness may like night-walking Shades be Chased away by the Light, but who shall pull a Mote out of the Eye of the Sun, and if the Light that is in us be Darkness, how great, I had almost say'd how incurable, is that Darkness. Frail Man whose First thoughts are so short and confused has

room

room and indulgence for Second, but full Light seems to exclude Repentance, and no sooner does an Angel Sin but he becomes a Devil. How then can we hope to reform such a Knowing and Rational Age by Reason and Discourse! And yet I Consider again that since all sin is founded in Error and Wrong Reasoning of one sort or other, and implies at least Actual, if not Habitual Ignorance, the Application is still to be made to Men's Reason and Understanding (as the part primely affected) if not to inform them what they Know not, yet at least to ingage their Reflexion and Consideration upon what they Know. And this I take to be the great End both of our Preaching and of our Writing, and if any well disposed Christian shall to this purpose receive any Advantage from these, or any other of my Discourses, I hope he will remember me in his Prayers, and God in his Praises and Thanksgivings.

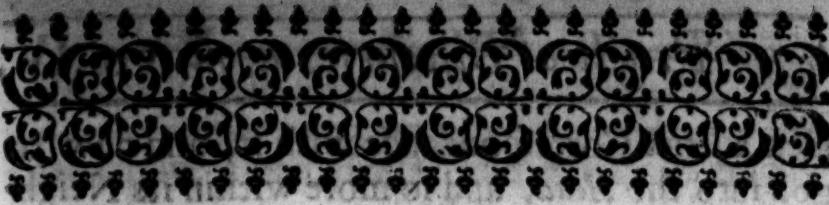
J. Norris.

The

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OF



O F

Religious Discourse

I N

Common Conversation.

In Three Parts.

V O L. IV.

PSAL. 37. 30.

The Mouth of the Righteous speaketh Wisdom, and his Tongue talketh of Judgment.



HIS it seems was the Character of a Good Man in King David's time; he was known by his good Discourse; and if it be not so now, 'tis either because Mens Thoughts are not so good as they were then, or because we are mightily gone off from the Plainness and Simplicity of that Age, and are not so much disposed to speak what we think. However it be, it may seem at first somewhat strange that when Religion was more in the *Hearts* of Men, at a further distance from the Tongue, it should hold

B b b

such

such a strict Correspondence with it, and now 'tis got into the *Head*, and so more within its Neighbourhood, it should be yet such a stranger to it. But when I think again my Wonder ceases. For though the Tongue has its dwelling in the *Head*, it has its Motion from the *Heart*. And so our Saviour tells us, *Mat. 12. 34.* that *out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh*. But we no where read that out of the Abundance of the *Head* the Mouth speaketh. Nor do we find it so by Experience, but rather the contrary, Silence being the common Effect of much Knowledge. Let a Man's *Head* be never so full, and it may continue so without Aking, but if his *Heart* be full it must discharge it self or break. Thus 'tis not only observ'd, but even complain'd of Studious and Contemplative Men, that tho' their Heads be never so plentifully furnish'd with what they read and think, they can yet forbear talking of it, and commonly do so, those of them that think and know most, being remarkable for speaking least, which makes their Conversation so insignificant and unedifying, as generally it is. But 'tis not so with *Lovers*, nor yet with the Men of the World. They are not so reserv'd and lock'd up, but will be continually talking of their several *Mistresses*, and fancy the Subject as acceptable to others as it is to themselves, so that you may quickly know what they are, and which is their dominant and governing Passion by their Discourse. All Love is talkative, and tho' the *Head* can be so contentedly Silent, the *Heart* cannot. When that is full of any thing, even the Dumb cannot forbear speaking, and the Passion that loosens their Tongues will also make them eloquent. And because good

Men

Men have their Hearts and Minds as much set upon Goodness, as the Men of the World have theirs upon Worldly and Carnal Objects, since the Love of God and of Vertue is their great Passion, and Religion the Weight and Bias of their Souls, hence 'tis that the Vein of their Discourse runs altogether upon that strain, and while Vanity and Folly, Sin and Impertinence are the beaten Subjects of Ordinary Conversation, *The Mouth of the Righteous speaketh Wisdom, and his Tongue talketh of Judgment.*

I need not bestow any Critical Nicety upon the Words *Wisdom* and *Judgment*, so frequently used in Scripture, which takes no notice by way of Commendation of any Wisdom but what serves to the Government of a Man's Life, and the Salvation of his Soul, and which commonly uses Judgment for Justice and Equity, as also more at large for the Rules and Precepts of Morality and Good Life in General. And that it signifies so here, sufficiently appears from the following part of this Character of a good Man in the next Verse, *The Law of his God is in his Heart.* From which put together, the intent of the Psalmist seems to be to Characterize a good Man by this Property, that he is one that is wont upon all occasions to season even his Ordinary Conversation with good wholesome Discourse, some Pious and Religious Matter or other, that may serve to inlighthen and edify those that hear him, and make them the Wiser and the Better for his Company.

THE Subject then that I am led to treat of upon the Occasion of these Words, is, *Of Religious Discourse in Ordinary Conversation:* For the ful-

ler and more distinct Consideration of which my present Undertaking shall be,

FIRST, To Inquire into the Reasons why Discourse about Religion is so much disused, even by Good Men, in Common Conversation.

SECONDLY, To shew the Insufficiency of those Reasons, and that to season his Discourse with the things of Religion is one real part of the Duty of Man.

THIRDLY, To shew that those who are very good indeed, and have a due thorough Sense of Religion, will have regard to this Practice, and at least in some considerable Measure, exercise themselves in it. So making good the Character given of them by the Psalmist, *The Mouth of the Righteous speaketh Wisdom, and his Tongue talketh of Judgment.*

Part I. AND First for the Reasons of the Disuse of Religion in Discourse. And here in the First place I take it for granted that I am not going to account for an Imaginary Defect, or Neglect in *Idea* only, but that the Case supposed is Real, that to talk of Religion is indeed very much disused and out of Fashion, and that among People of laudable Character, and otherwise good and virtuous. Not that the Articles, Points, Questions and Controversies of Religion are so pass'd over in silence, No, there was always Noise and Clamour enough about them, and never more than now, tho' there be but little Truth gain'd, and a great deal of Charity lost in the Contention. But 'tis not the Notional, but the Practical Part of Religion whose disuse in Conversation I complain of. Men do indeed talk

talk of Religion, but not of that which is Practical, nor in a Practical way, that is, I mean after such a serious and devotional manner as to put one another in Remembrance of the great Concernments of a good Life, and of that two-fold Eternity which depends upon it, and to stir one another up to the Works of Piety and Charity, and the Exercise of such Christian Graces as are necessary both to carry them to Heaven, and to qualify them for the Enjoyment of it. Do Men talk thus of Religion? No, Wicked Men cannot, and Good Men (unless they be very good indeed, whose Number, God knows, a few Figures will serve to cast up) for some certain Reasons too often decline it. So that between them both, what thro' the Indisposition of the One and the Incapacity of the Other, a Man may make visit after Visit, go from House to House, out of one Company into another, for it may be a Twelvemonth together, and never hear one word of Religion pass, unless it be (as was hinted before) by way of Wrangle and Dispute, and that indeed unless he stop his Ears, he can hardly avoid, if he can then. But as for any serious and edifying Discourse about it, whither shall a Man go, unless it be to *Church*, to hear any such thing? All the Discourse of the World runs upon the things of the World, such as News, Trade, Business, Learning, not to say any thing of lesser and meaner Subjects that employ Gossiping and Censorious Tongues. And these things make the great Buz and Hum of the City. But as for Religion there is in all this hurry such an universal Hush and Silence about it, that were it not for our Books of Devotion and our Churches, (those two Provi-

dential Monuments and Preservatives of declining Piety) a Stranger would hardly know whether there were any Religion among us. Sure I am it would be a great while before he would find it by our Discourse; and were he to pick it out by that, for ought I know he might learn our Language much sooner. It looks in my Mind as if Religion had a kind of *Imbargo* laid upon it, and Men were under a Prohibition to talk of it, and to forfeit some Penalty to the Government if they did. Were this the Case, I am confident they could not be more silent concerning it than they are, and considering the bent of our Inclination to what is forbid, I question whether they would be so much!

AND yet Men profess Religion all this while, express a decent regard towards it, and pretend to believe the weighty Doctrines of it, the Being of God, the Resurrection of the Body, the Immortality of the Soul, and the two great Eternities. And is it not strange then that they should never talk of these things? Should but any two of these Men travel together upon the Road, especially if to a place of considerable Note, and which they were never at before, and where they were ever after to dwell, how often would they talk of it before they got to it! Now is not this exactly our Case? We are all Travellers, and our Life is but a Journey, and we are bound not for a little Town or City, but for another World, to which we are perfect Strangers at present, and in which we are to take up our happy or miserable abode for ever. And is it not then very strange that Men should Travel on together day after day for many Years following, upon a Journey

ney of such Consequence as this, and never entertain themselves upon the Road with what all other Travellers do, discourse about their Journey's End, and the right way that leads to it. That a thing that is so much every Body's Concern, should be almost no Body's Discourse. Is not this a Wonder? yes it is, the very greatest that I know of in the World. But then this makes it the more necessary to consider the Reasons of so strange a Conduct.

AND here I think in the First place 'tis very plain and obvious why Wicked Men talk no more of Religion, even because they have none to talk of. The reason why there is so little of it in their Mouths, is because there is less of it in their Hearts. When there are so many other Subjects that are more agreeable to their Tastes, they have no Heart to talk of a thing they have neither Notion nor relish of themselves, and which would but lull their jolly Company asleep. And truly 'tis no great matter whether they do or no, since they must needs do it with a very ill Grace, and to very little purpose. Religion has no advantage from the Commendations of those whose Lives are a constant Satyr upon it, and they do it dishonour enough by their bare Profession of it, and therefore need not add to that the further disgrace of their Discourse. And unless they owe it a Spite, and have a mind either to Affront that or their Company, sure they will not. For certainly the Religious Discourse of him cannot be very decent to Men, whose *Religion* it self, whose very *Prayer* is an Abomination to God, and if a Parable, as *Solomon* says, *Prov. 26. 7.* be not comely in the Mouth of a Fool, much less is Re-

ligion in the Mouth of an ill Man. But I think we may excuse them here, it being a fault they are very rarely guilty of, unless it be upon two particular Occasions, when they are either *Drunk* or about to *Dye*, and then indeed you shall have some of them very devoutly given, and much for talking of Religion, but at other times they studiously baulk and decline it as too flat a Subject for their gay Spirits.

But 'tis not worth while to consider any longer what these Men do, or upon what Grounds and Motives they act. It is of more Consequence to inquire into the Grounds and Reasons of the great disuse of Religious Discourse among good Men. And here though I doubt not but that this is in great measure to be ascrib'd to want of Goodness too as well as in the other sort, or which is all one to the imperfection of it, since, as will be made appear under the Third Part, those who have a due Sense of Religion, and a thorough Zeal for it, will shew it by their Discourse, yet because the Men I am now speaking of, tho' not the very Best, are yet supposed to be Good, and so must have a true Love and Value for Religion, and consequently must be supposed willing enough of themselves to talk of it, were there not some Discouragements from without that did hinder them from so doing, I think it more material at present to consider what those unhappy Discouragements are. The most ordinary and most prevailing of which I take to be these Three.

1. *The Contempt that is generally cast upon Good Men.*
2. *The Fear of being thought Hypocrites.*

3. *Shame of being out of the Mode or Fashion.*

1. *The Contempt that is generally cast upon Good Men.* Not that I think an ill Man can possibly despise a good Man in his Heart. No, he has a secret Esteem and Veneration for him there, and as he would willingly dye the Death, so he inwardly honours the Life of the Righteous. But yet for all this Wicked Men have still so much of their Father the Devil in them, that they are loath to be unhappy alone, and take a solitary Journey to Hell, and are therefore for securing as much Company thither beforehand as they can. And in order to this they endeavour to fix a Mark of Ignominy and Disgrace upon Religion, and treat those that openly profess and practise it with Scorn and Contempt, thinking by their ridiculing Scoffs and Flouts either to laugh them out of it, or at least to discourage them from such an open Acknowledgement, and visible expression of it as shall do them or their Hellish Cause any hurt. Their Plot is against the very Being and Life of Religion, and if by this means they cannot extinguish its Vital Heat, yet they hope at least to stifle its Light, and hinder it from Shining. So that if Men will be good and virtuous they shall be so to themselves, and make no shew of their Piety to shame and upbraid those that have none, or to confirm those that have. This is their Devilish Policy, and with the Devil's help they too often succeed in it, having besides that Advantage a very strong Passion in Human Nature on their side. For there is nothing that Men more naturally love than Esteem, and nothing that they more naturally hate, and can less bear than Contempt. And since

since this Contempt is thus maliciously intail'd upon Goodness, this makes Good Men backward to discourse of Religion for fear they should meet with it, and so with the Psalmist, *Psal. 39.* they hold their Mouth as it were with a Bridle, while the ungodly are in their sight, and keep silence, yea, even from good Words, tho' it be Pain and Grief to them. For 'tis against the natural Grain and Disposition of their Minds, but they are afraid to appear what they are because of the Contempt that is annex'd to their Character, and therefore they chuse (tho' with inward reluctance) to hide their Goodness, and wear a Disguise over it, as some whose Profession obliges them to another sort of Habit, are said to travel sometimes in grey coats for fear of meeting with Affronts upon the Road. Why this is the very case of Good Men in the World. They dare not appear in their true Colours. But then by the way, is not the World come to a fine pass think ye, when Religion has so few Friends in it, that the Servants of Jesus Christ are afraid to wear their Master's Livery, least it should expose them to Affronts? But I forbear, and go on to the next Discouragement, which is,

2. *The Fear of being thought Hypocrites.* Hypocrisy is so odious a Vice that even the very Suspition of it is intolerable, and the Better any Man is the more uneasy and insupportable it must be to him. As there can be nothing so fundamentally contrary to the Nature and Character of a good Man, so there is nothing so deeply resented, or justly dreaded by him, to whom it must be a far less Affliction to be thought altogether without Religion, than to be thought a Pretender to it when

when he has none. Now here's another Artifice of Wicked Men against the Good and Pious. If they fail in their first Design, and cannot directly ridicule them out of their Religion, nor render them ridiculous for it, then they turn the Tables, and cry them down for *Hypocrites* and *Dissemblers*, and then they reckon they undermine the beautiful Fabrick of their Vertues at one blow, and make them contemptible and odious all at once. And because this is so effectual an Engin, you shall often find them at work with it. When they see a Man carry any extraordinary Appearances, or express any uncommon Symptoms of Religion (and as the World goes, ordinary ones are now become such) either in his Actions, or in his Deportment, or in his Discourse, the next word is, *I'll warrant you he is a Hypocrite*, and then they reckon they have done his work, and their own too. Now tho' this be a most extravagant and unconscionable way of censuring, to set Men down for Hypocrites because they wear about them the Marks and Characters of Religion, yet I must needs confess that a certain sort of Men in the World have unhappily contributed too much Occasion to it, and Pretence for it, partly by their talking of Religion after such a Canting, Whining, Awkward and Fantastical Manner, so as to betray the want of it at the same time; and partly by acting against it while in their Discourse they seem'd so passionately zealous and concern'd for it, by being found wanting in the great Duties of Morality, and particularly to make bold with the Precepts of the *Second Table*, while they overflow'd with Religious Sentences, dropt Scripture as they went, and had nothing but *God, Christ and Heaven*

ven in their Mouths. This Awkward and nauseous way of talking of Religion was enough of it self to make Men sick of it. But then the gross Immorality that usually went along with it, did so further prejudice and possess them against it, that whenever they heard Men begin any Discourse about Religion, they thought presently there was some Dishonesty a hatching, and that 'twas time to look to their Pockets. By this means good Communication was brought into discredit, the Palate of the World was disgusted at it, some were jealous of it, others afraid of it, and all conceiv'd a Prejudice and an Aversion against it; so that the Holy Things of Religion fell at length into Contempt and Disrepute, nay, became an Abomination and an Offence, insomuch that (as 'tis said upon the Occasion of the Miscarriages of *Eli's Sons*) *Men abhor'd the Offerings of the Lord*, 1 Sam. 2. 17. And as the Text moreover says, that the Sin of the young Men was great, so I doubt not but that the Men I speak of have a great deal to answer for the Prejudice they have done to the Interest of Religion, the general disrelish and distaste they have rais'd in Mens Minds against it, the scandal they have laid in the way of good Men, and the Advantage they have given to the bad, who have not fail'd to make the utmost use and improvement of it. For I cannot but look upon this as the chief Cause of the great Disuse of Religious Discourse, of which even good Men are grown shy, ashamed, nay even afraid, lest they should be thought guilty of that Hypocrisy which some of our late Pretenders were so notorious, and so infamous for. The short is, Men were got into a very odd and untoward way of

of talking of Religion, and some of the greatest Talkers of it were withal observ'd to be some of the greatest Knaves, and to make use of their Sanctify'd Discourse only as a Disguise to palliate, and as an Instrument to Execute their Knavery, and this made honest and well-meaning Men avoid it, for fear they should be taken for Knaves and Hypocrites too. And the same Consideration has too great an Influence upon them still, and 'tis a Prejudice they cannot yet get over. But there is another considerable Objection behind, and that is,

3. *The Shame of being out of the Mode and Fashion of the World.* This Reason I put last, because it supposes Religious Discourse to be already in disuse for the sake of the two former, and does not first make it so, but only adds more Weight to the already prevailing Scale. The Contempt that lies upon Good Men, and the Fear of being taken for Hypocrites first jointly conspire to bring Religious Discourse out of Fashion ; and when it is so, then the shame of being out of that Fashion contributes to the further forbearance and disuse of it. The Mode and Custom of the World is one of the most ingaging and bewitching things in it ; one of the first that Fools learn, and one of the last that Wise Men can find the Courage to despise. 'Tis so in all things, but in nothing so much as in Discourse, whose conformity to Custom is reckon'd its greatest Elegance and Commendation, as well in the Choice of the Subject as in the use of Words and Phrases. Men usually talk, not only according to the Tone and Dialect of their several Countries, but upon those Subjects too that are most fashionable and creditable there. For you must know that there are certain Modish Subjects

Subjects as well as modish Expressions and ways of Talking, and those different according to the diversity of Ages, Places and Persons. The Courtier's Subject is Love and Gallantry, the Gentleman talks of his Country-Sports and Recreations, the Tradesman of Business and Six to the Hundred, the Scholar a little indeed more to the purpose of Books and Learning ; but none of these talk of *Religion* ; that's a stale, out-dated, antiquated, superannuated Subject, too dull and melancholy for the Gaiety of this spruce and more accomplish'd Age, and a Man were as good be seen in an Antick Dress, or with a Ruff about his Neck, as to have it in his Mouth. And accordingly those that have it in their Hearts are apt to be very wary and cautious how they let it appear *there*. They see that the Humour of the World runs against them, that there are so many more pleasing and agreeable Subjects to talk of, that Religion can find no place, and is in a manner shut out of all Conversation, that the Great and the Wise, the Well-bred and the Learned, and even the Good too, very gravely pass it over, and they are loth to be singular, and know not how indeed to begin an unwelcome Discourse upon an unmodish Subject, and which, if they should, no body would second them in, or thank them for ; or perhaps so much as give them a patient Hearing ; and so partly out of caution and prudent regard to themselves, and partly out of good Breeding and Respect to their Company, they very mannerly and civilly let it alone. And by this means it comes to pass that other Channels are cut out for our Discourse, which runs upon all the Subjects in the World besides,

sides, whether great or little, good or bad, so that nothing can escape the reach and compass of our Talk, while in the mean time Religion, which is the Glory of our Natures, the End of our Beings, the Noblest Object of our Thoughts, the greatest Concernment of our Lives, and the best Employment of our Tongues, is yet confined to the Closet, and dares not appear abroad, or breathe in the open Air, but like a Lamp in an Urn is forced to burn under Ground, and to shine within its little Subterraneous inclosure, where none can see or enjoy its Light. The World in short is come to this, that that Freedom, Openness and Ingenuity that belongs to Religion and Virtue, is usurp'd by Vice and Wickedness, and that Guilt, Shame and Reservedness, which is proper and due only to Vice, is by a strange Combination and Agreement imposed upon Religion; so that as excellent a thing as it is, even those that have it are ashame'd to own it, but every Man keeps it as a *Fairy-Treasure* to himself, as if he were to lose either *that* or his *Credit* by the Discovery. And thus have I laid before you the Principal Reasons of the great disuse of Religion in our Common Discourse. And lest they should be thought to justify that unhappy Effect which they so ordinarily produce, I come now in the next place,

SECONDLY, To shew the Insufficiency of these Reasons, and that to see Part. II.
son his Discourse with the things of Religion is one real part of the Duty of Man. And first as to the *Contempt* that so usually waits upon Goodness, what is there in it that should so much as move

move a Person of Sense and Discretion (which I suppose every Good Man in some measure to be) when he considers that 'tis only *Contempt*, that is, only an Opinion, which being a Thought of the Mind may indeed express it self in Words, Looks, and Supercilious Behaviour, but can neither wound the Flesh, nor break the Bones, nor make the Object of it any further unhappy than he pleases. For when all's done, 'tis not another's Thought concerning a Man, but his own that must afflict him, and make him uneasy, and if he can but master his own Reflection, he may at once defy and despise the other's Opinion. As he may easily do if he consider further that 'tis not only mere *Contempt*, but the *Contempt* of an ill Man, who for the same reason to be sure is so ill a Judge that his good Character would be the truest Scandal, and if he thought never so Honourably of a deserving Person, it would be that Person's Interest to bribe him to keep his Opinion to himself. But then again, 'tis not only bare *Contempt*, and that of an ill Man, but an ill Man's *Contempt* of one that is good, and therefore Worthy of the highest Honour and Esteem, and that for doing what belongs to him as such, for acting according to his excellent Nature and Character. 'Tis as if one should despise *Light* for *shining*. And can there be any thing more contemptible, as well as absurd, than such a *Contempt*, unless it be the Author of it? All this I speak upon Supposition that an ill Man could possibly despise one whom he thinks truly good: But what if he cannot? What if all this *Contempt* (as was remark'd before) be nothing but in *shew* and *external Treatment*, nothing but

afore'd acting of an uncivil part, while at the same time he secretly Honours and Reverences him within himself? What a poor despicable thing must this empty Shadow of disrespect then appear, how unworthy, I will not say of a Good Man's Concern, but even of his very Notice and Consideration!

THEN in the next place as to the Fear of being thought a *Hypocrite*, I will readily allow it to be as bad a Thought as one Man can possibly entertain of another (which by the way should make Men tender and cautious how they proceed to so severe a Censure) but then 'tis no more than a *Thought*, and that commonly of the more rash and hasty as well as disaffected Judges, and in the present Case a very unjust one, there being no rational ground why any Man should be thought guilty of Hypocrisy for talking Religiously, unless he betray it himself, either by the Affected and Fantastick manner of his Discourse, or by the visible Demonstration of a contrary Life. Religious talking absolutely consider'd and in it self, is no Natural sign of Hypocrisy, but of the contrary, for who should talk of Religion but those that have a deep Sense of it, and are animated with its Power and Spirit? There is, I know, a way of Talking, or rather, *Prating* of Religion, which may justly expose a Man to that Suspicion, but truly if a Man Discourse of it seriously, gravely, soberly and unaffectedly, and does not appear to bely his Discourse by his Practice, whatever Wicked and Envious Men may out of Malice or Policy give out, I can hardly believe that they who call him Hypocrite with their Mouths, do in their Hearts really think him

so. But whether they do or no, what great matter is it, and what need a Good Man be so much concern'd to be thought or censur'd as a Hypocrite by a Company of Fallible Creatures at best, and for the most part Fools and Sots, when he is Conscious to himself of his own Sincerity, and can with Boldness Appeal to the great Infallible Judge for the Truth and Integrity of his Heart.

THEN Lastly, As to the *Shame* of being out of the *Mode* and *Fashion*, this one would think should be even to an ordinary Measure of Wisdom and Goodness, a very Vincible and Surpassable Discouragement. For alas what is a *Mode* or *Fashion*, but only a continued and settled Practice of a great Many? A *Mode* implies only Matter of *Fact*, not of *Reason* or *Right*. 'Tis not what a great many should do, but what they do do, and for some considerable time continue to do. For there are two things that go to the making of a *Mode* or *Fashion*, the Practice of a great Many, and the continuation and settlement of that Practice. The Practice of a Few does not make a *Fashion*, nor of a great Many if it have not some Continuance. But now that a thing be done for a long time, or by a great many (besides that those *Many*, though the *Major*, are generally the least considerable part of *Mankind*) is so Casual and Fortuitous a thing, and that depends upon so many little Accidents and Contingencies, not to say Whimseys and Caprices, that the World had need be much another thing than it is to deserve that a Wise Man should pay any great deference to any of its *Fashions*. Indeed did Men always act considerately

ly and upon Principles of Sense and Reason, nay, even according to the best of that Understanding which they have, the Case would be very different, but as they are pleas'd now to order the Matter, that which we call the Fashion of the World, is little better than the Humour of the World, and what great regard is there due to that? Something indeed there is in it, so much, that a Man would not willingly be out of the Mode when he might be as well in it, but would Comply with it as far as he might innocently and reasonably, and not be Singulat for Nothing. But yet after all, a Mode that has no Natural Reason or Ground, but only mere Custom and Use to Support it, is but a very little thing. And what then is an ill Mode, a Mode that is against all Sense and Reason and Religion too, and that tends to the Discouragement and Suppression, I may say Extinction of that little Piety that is left among us? And what Reason is there that a good Man (one of whose principal Characters is, *Not to be Conform'd to the Course of the World*) should decline discoursing of the only Subjects that's worth talking of, for fear of transgressing such a Mode? But the Mischief of it is, Fools begin Fashions, and Wise Men not only Follow, but Authorize them. And thus you see how slight and trivial these Mighty Objections are when they come to be look'd into, which discourse so many Good Men from talking of Religion, and withal, by the way, what little things will hinder us from doing that which is Good. But suppose they were never so considerable otherwise and in themselves, yet

what are they, and how little ought they to be regarded, when they come in Competition with a Man's Duty! I say a Man's Duty, for so I call it, and shall now prove it so be from the Three great Heads of the Duty of every Man, that to Himself, that to his Neighbour, and that to God.

AND First 'tis a Duty that every Man owes to Himself. The great and general Duty that every Man owes to himself is to Consult the Perfection of his Rational Nature, and to provide for the Eternal Happiness of his Soul. And the next to that is to use all those Means which directly lead to that End, and have a near Connexion with it. Now as a Holy and Religious Frame and Temper of Mind is the nearest and most immediate Means to that, so there is nothing that does more Naturally conduce to cherish and keep up in a Man a Warm and Vital Sense of Religion, than frequently to talk of it. Meditation upon good things is indeed of excellent use to this purpose, and accordingly the Psalmist makes it one Part of the Good Man's Character, *Psal. 1.* that he *Meditates in the Law of God day and night.* And so in the Verse after the Text it is said of him, that *the Law of his God is in his Heart.* But yet however, Religious Thoughts when they are confined to the Mind, and transacted only in the Scene of the Imagination, have not half that Influence upon the Man, as when they are cloath'd with Words, and are audibly uttered by the Tongue. Meditation is a great Improvement to a Scholar, but yet to Discourse over, and Communicate his Notions to another, serves yet further to improve him, and lets in New and More Light into his Thoughts. And so 'tis in Religion, to Think and

and Meditate of it silently to ones self, is, no doubt, a very Comfortable and Edifying Practice, but yet when we talk of it to another, it makes a deeper Impression upon us, and we are quite otherwise affected with it than when we mused upon it privately by our selves alone. And indeed let a Man retire into his Closet never so duly, and employ himself there never so devoutly in Prayer, Meditation and Communion with God, yet to have no body to talk to of Religion afterwards, when he comes forth, nor to hear it talk'd of, must needs be a great damp to him, and if not quite unbend, must yet however very much *slacken* the *Spring* of his Devotion. Which by the way is the great disadvantage of *Hermits* and Solitary Recluses. Their Light Shines only through an empty Medium, without meeting with any Body in its way to return it, and so wants the Reflection of its own Beams. They may have a good Principle of Spiritual Life in them, but the Heavenly Plant is too much streightned and bound up to thrive, and cannot shoot forth its Branches very far (how good soever its Root may be) for want of Liberty and Room. But then where's the Difference in this respect betwixt living in a Desart and in the World, since Religion is in a manner as little Discours'd of in the one as in the other? Why truly the odds is not much, save only that what is actually thus in Society, as Men are pleas'd to order it, must of necessity be so in perfect Solitude, and that in the World, as wicked and ill order'd as it is, a Man may possibly meet with a Correspondent in Piety with whom he may Traffique and Negotiate in the Affairs of Heaven, which in a Desart he cannot, but till he

does do to his Case is the same with that of a Hermit, (only in some Respects a great deal worse, as liable to the Assaults of bad Discourse as well as to the want of Good) and his Religion has the very same disadvantage to contend with. And that truly a very great one. For even Fire it self will languish and go out if it want Air, and so will Devotion too if it have not vent by good Discourse, which Fans and Ventilates its Holy Fire, and serves (even as much as Fuel it self) to nourish and keep it alive. And I cannot but reckon the want of this among the chief Causes of the great and long lamented Decay of Christian Piety. For Conversation is the very Air and Breath, I had almost said the Lungs, of Religion, without which it will be in danger of being stifled and choak'd up, but with which it will glow, and flame out, and burn bright. And therefore since to talk of Religion is an Exercise that tends so much to the Advantage of it, every Man certainly owes so much at least to himself, and the Care of his own Soul, as frequently to Use and Practise it. But further,

SECONDLY, 'Tis also a Duty that every Man owes to his Neighbour; whom he is bound to love as himself, and whose Spiritual Welfare therefore he is to regard and set forward as he would do his own. Now he cannot express this his Charitable regard to his Neighbour better, nor promote his Soul's Health and Happiness more than by using Pious and Religious Discourse to him in his Ordinary Conversation with him. For as Evil Communication Corrupts Good Manners, so Good Communication will Reform Evil Ones, and make them that are Good better. And since

Wicked

Wicked Men, those Emissaries of the Devil, are so busie to season those they Converse with, what they can, with the Hellish Leaven of their Lewd, Prophane, and Immoral Talk, why should not Good Men, if 'twere only to Countertermine the others Wickedness, think themselves as much concern'd to dispose Men to Goodness by their Pious Discourse? Not that after all they can reasonably hope to do as much Good by their wholesome, as the others do Mischief by their poisonous Breath; because these latter row with the Stream, and have the Bias of Corrupt Nature on their side. But however a great deal of Good may be done, and if any thing will reform the World, and revive in it the Old Evangelick Spirit of Primitive Piety, it must be Good Familiar Discourse. For besides the many particular good Offices that may be done with it by informing the Ignorant, by awakening those that do not Consider nor Practise what they know, by quickning the Lukewarm, by Comforting the Afflicted and the like, there is this general Advantage that will further accrue by it to Mankind, People will see and be Convinc'd that there is a Sense of Religion in the World (which truly they are tempted to question when they hear no body talk of it) and that there are some in it that in spite of all the Discouragements of a perverse and Corrupt Age, dare own and stand by the Cause of God, do not scruple to declare what Master they serve, by wearing his Livery, are neither ashamed of what they profess, nor afraid of any ill Consequences of professing it, which must needs be a great Comfort, Incouragement and Edification to all that are Witnesses of such a truly Great and

Noble Instance of Christian Bravery. And truly as easy and as pleasant as the Paths of Piety and Religion are, a little Company would do well in the way to Heaven, as well as upon other Roads, and there is no Traveller so active and full of Spirit, but what would Travel better in Society with others, than all alone by himself. *Prov. 27. 17. As Iron sharpeneth Iron, so a Man sharpeneth the Countenance of his Friend,* says Solomon; that is, quickens and enlivens him, and sets a new Edge both upon his Wit, and upon his Passions and Affections. 'Tis so in Other things as well as in Religion, but Most of all in Religion, the Impressions of which nothing will make enter so deep, or remain so long in the Hearts of Men, as the serious and frequent use of it in Ordinary Discourse. I say *Ordinary* Discourse. For to talk of it upon Solemn Occasions only, looks too much like a *Formality*, and though good Books and Sermons be of Excellent Use, and may here and there do a great deal of Good, yet they are but dead things in comparison of those *Living Births* of Piety that come from the Mouth in Conversation, when Hearts truly toucht with the Love of God communicate their Light and Heat, and blow up one anothers dormant Fires into a burning and shining Flame. And therefore since there is so much Edification in Religious Discourse, the great Advantage that accrues to our Neighbour as well as to our selves by it, may serve as another Argument both to Oblige, and to Persuade us to the Practice of it. But we are yet further to Consider,

T H I R D L Y, That 'tis also a Duty that every Man owes to God, for whose Glory he was made, and

and whose Honour and Glory by the great Law and End of his Creation he is to seek and advance, and which he cannot better promote than by Religious Discourse, by talking Honourably of God, and speaking Good of his Name, by representing the Excellency of his Being and Nature, the Order and Wisdom, the Justice and Goodness of his Government, the Reasonableness and Equity of his Laws, the Pleasantness and perfect Freedom of his Service, the great Instances of his Fatherly Love and Kindness to us here, and the Glorious Rewards that he has prepared and reserves for us hereafter, besides those more direct and immediate Glorifications of God, which consist in Acts of *Praise* and *Thanksgiving*, which by themselves make a good part of Religious Discourse. By these we shall render God and his ways lovely and amiable in the Eyes of the World, win over Subjects to his Government, set up his Kingdom in their Hearts, raise Religious Sentiments in the Minds of Men, and stir 'em up to the Love, Fear, Worship and Adoration of the Great and Good God, and to express their Devotional Affections to him in Conformity to his Will, and in Obedience to his Laws, which after all is the truest Honour and Glorification of God, according to that of our Saviour, *John 15. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit.* And thus also upon the Account of the Duty we owe to God, as well as that we owe to our Neighbour and our Selves, we are Obliged to the Practice of Religious Discourse, which now upon this threefold Ground appears to be a real part of the Duty of Man.

I might further argue the same from the Natural End and Use of *Speech*, which without doubt was given us for higher and more Material Purposes, than to drive Bargains upon the Exchange, or to talk Politicks over a News Letter, or to hold an Impertinent Chat in Gossiping Company about Cloaths and Fashions, and the little Affairs and Transactions of the Neighbourhood. 'Tis remarkable that among all the Creatures of the World, Man is the only one that has Religion, and the only one too that has Speech, and is there not great reason to think that one of these was naturally intended in order to the other? And what shall a Man talk of, what Subject is there that is Worthy of his Discourse, if not that which is at once his *Perfection* and his *Distinction*.

But this Matter is sufficiently clear'd from *Reason*; all therefore that I shall further add in Confirmation of it shall be from *Scripture*. To this purpose I might alledge that general Exhortation of our Saviour Christ, *Mat. 5. 16.* *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven;* which without doubt is as applicable to good Words, as to good Works, as being alike Exemplary, and alike tending to Edification. But I shall lay the stress of the Matter upon two or three express Texts that speak more home to the Point, and indeed so home as to decide it. And first I take hold of those plain words of St. Paul, *Ephes. 4. 29.* *Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers.* Again, says the Apostle, *Col. 4. 6.* *Let your Speech be alway with Grace, season'd with Salt, that ye may know*

know how ye ought to answer every Man. Again, 1 Thess. 5. 11. *Wherefore comfort your selves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.* And again, Heb. 10. 24, 25. *Let us Consider one another, to provoke unto Love, and to Good Works—Exhorting one another, &c.* Than which few Texts nothing can be more plain, and 'tis no great sign of our Reverence to Holy Scripture that such plain and positive Injunctions of it should be so little regarded.

AND thus you see how both Reason and Scripture Conspire to bind it as a Duty upon us, to Season our Discourse with the things of Religion, which is that *Saluare Condimentum*, that Divine Salt, that will give a wholesome and relishing Savour to our Conversation, and withal (which is another property of Salt) preserve our Graces from Corruption and Decay. And truly Considering the Moment of the things themselves, and the great Usefulness of talking of them, though there were nothing of Duty or Obligation in the Case, one would think that People should Discourse of little or nothing else, and should be so far from declining this important Subject in its proper times and places, that they should fall abruptly into it, force a Discourse of it, talk of it in Season, and (if that can be) out of Season too, with Occasion and without Occasion, and should even stop and lay hold on one another as they meet in the very Streets to talk of the great Concernments of Religion and of another Life (forgetting the little Trifles of this) so that the Main Inter-course and Transaction of Mankind should be about the One thing Necessary, and the whole World should be but as one great *Spiritual Exchange*.

W H Y,

WHY, thus I believe it will be under the Glorious and Happy Interval of the Church, when the true Primitive Spirit of Christianity (which is now a Body without a Soul) shall revive, and the Antichristian one shall be destroy'd, when Truth and Righteousness shall return to the long forsaken Earth, and Devotion and Charity be set again upon the Throne. Then the Holy Spirit of God will again descend in Tongues of Fire, and as the Minds of Men become more Spiritual, and refine more and more from the Dregs of Earth, their Conversation shall still grow more Divine and Heavenly. Then will the present Impertinencies of Society be exchang'd for nobler Subjects of Discourse, and instead of the vain Trifles and Amusements of this World, the great things of Religion and Heaven shall be the Common Theme, which shall be talk'd of with all mutual Freedom and Temper, without Reserve, without Passion, without Affectation, and without any of those little Designs and Artifices which now both disguise and disrelish Conversation, and make Men suspicious and jealous of one another. All shall be then open, free and ingenuous, every Man's Heart a *thorough light* to every Man, as having no fear of what is bad, nor shame of what is good. So that they shall talk of what is Best in the best and most indearing Manner, till the Earth which is now polluted and profaned with vain and wicked Conversation, shall be sanctify'd as it were into another Heaven, and the Conferences of Men shall be like the Discourses of Angels and glorified Spirits, *full of Grace and Truth*. Thus I say 'tis reasonable to think it will be, but in the mean time how would it both amaze

maze and trouble any considering Man to see how this great and excellent Duty (for so I now call it) is neglected, how little Discourse there is of Religion passing in the Christian World, how Shy, Wary, and as it were Ashamed Men are of it, how it is Banish'd and Excluded from all Company, and forc'd to retire into Churches for Sanctuary; in short, how it is not only Carelessly omitted, but even industriously shun'd and avoided, and that by Men otherwise Good and Pious, and whose particular Profession it may be, obliges them to another sort of Deportment? But I have drawn a sad, and black Nighipece of this already, and therefore need not further illustrate it here. Only let me ask you what would you think of this Story I am about to tell you from an Author of great Wit and Observation?

Two Religious Persons, of an Order very Austerer, and whose Habit sufficiently signified the Austerity of it, had some Occasion to be at Court; where they happen'd to fall into Company with a Man of much Wit, and that passed with all for one of great Intelligence, was known to deal much in News, and to be able to tell it agreeably, and with a good Grace. Who seeing himself in Company with two such pieces of Gravity, thought he must now act another part, and so laying aside the usual Topicks of his Discourse, he talk'd to 'em of nothing but of Devotion and Piety. But he quickly found himself mistaken. For our Holy Fathers perceiving that their Courtier and Statesman would tell them no News, and that he was for talking to them only of Religious Matters, went out of the Room no less

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less disgusted than disappointed. What, say they, as they were going out, does the Man take us for a Couple of Fools, does he think we are good for Nothing but *Devotion* ?

Good for nothing but Devotion ! Strange that Men should think themselves affronted by being counted Devout, and thus cowardly disown and be ashamed of their Character and Profession, and that at the very time when they wore the Signs and Badges of it upon their Backs ! One would think it should be the Fashion for Men both to talk, and to be talkt with in their own way, and about things relating to their Profession. And so 'tis in all things besides, in all Arts and Sciences, Trades, Callings and Occupations of Life, except only in Religion, and here even the very Professors of it start back, and are struck Dumb, will talk of any thing rather than of the best and greatest Subject, and which they are also supposed to understand best ; and as some are said to glory in their Shame, so these are ashamed of their Glory. But yet however the Cause of Religion (thanks be to God) is not yet so desperate, but that she has some Friends left that dare and will stand by her, and are not afraid to wear her Colours, and publickly to own their Relation to her in the midst of a Wicked and Irreligious World. Which brings me to the last thing proposed, which was

THIRDLY to shew that those Part. III. who are very good indeed, and have a due Sense of Religion, and a thorough Zeal for it, will shew it by their Discourse. I have already touch'd upon this in the Entrance upon this Subject; but shall now give it

a more particular Consideration. And for the proof of it we have a great deal of Reason, and (thanks be to God) some Experience. For though there are some Degrees of Goodness that will be overborn by the formentioned Difficulties and Discouragements, yet there are some again that will not, but on the Contrary will outweigh them, and prevail against them. To which agrees that of our Saviour, *out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh.* The Words have a particular Force and Emphasis in the Original, *καὶ τὸς ἀερωνυμίας τὸς ῥαπτὸς*, out of the overfullness, redundancy, or superfluity of the Heart. There are some Measures of Grace and Goodness which the Heart can hold in and keep to it self, but if larger quantities be pour'd into it, it will run over, and discharge it self into the Tongue, and so tho' every degree of Depth will not make it overflow, yet a very high and swelling Tide will, and out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth will be sure to speak.

FOR I Consider in the First place, that he that has a great Sense and Impression of Religion upon him, and whose Heart does thus *Abound* with it, must have a great Measure of *Faith*. For Faith being the great Mother Virtue, and the Head-spring of all that is good in us, it must as all other Springs do, at least rise as high as the Streams that issue from it. The thing I intend in plain Words out of Figure is this, that our Faith being the Principal and Foundation of our other good Works and Habits, it must bear Proportion with its Effects. So that he that has a great Measure of Religious Impression upon his Heart, must have a Measure of Faith in Proportion to it. That is, he must firmly believe, and be thoroughly

thoroughly persuaded of the Truth of Religion, and of all the Fundamental Points of it. And that not only Habitually and in General, so as to be able to say Amen to the Creed when 'tis rehear'd, or to answer in the Affirmative to the Articles of it when he is put to the Question, *Dost thou believe, &c.* or to subscribe to it if occasion be to shew his Orthodoxy, and that he is no *Heretick*; (for he that has no Sense of Religion in his Heart, and makes no Conscience of it in his Life may do all this) but also Actually and in particular, that is, I mean he must not only think thus of the Points of Religion whenever he thinks about them, but must also actually and effectually think of them, and have as it were a present view and intuition of what he believes before him. He must be a Believer not only in *Habit*, so as to be denominated a Christian, and not a Jew or a Mahumetan, but in *Act*, so as to be an Attending and Considering Christian. He must in short not only have a Dormant and Periodical Faith that returns upon him at some certain Seasons, and for the rest of the time sleeps and slumbers in him, but a quick, lively, actual and awaken'd Faith, such a Faith as is next to Vision. As for Instance, The Existence of a Future World; I suppose such a One not only to believe this Habitually, that is, to be so far Convinc'd of the Truth of the Proposition, as to be ready to Subscribe to it whenever the Question is put to him, or if occasion require, to write a Book in Defence of it, but to have the Actual thought of it residing in his Mind, to Converse in the other World much after the same manner as other Men do in this, to See it and Feel it, and

and have as it were a Spiritual Sensation of it; in short, to have it so intellectually present to him, and set before him, as scarce ever to lose either its View, or its Impression.

THIS is that Faith which overcomes the World, and very properly makes those that have it more than Conquerors. The steady View, or rather Possession they have of the other World gives them an easy Victory and a daily Triumph over this. And tho' this be a very high, I question not but that it is an attainable Degree of Faith, and that there are some in the World that have it. But now the things of Religion are of such vast importance, that if thus believ'd in the Heart, they will by their own weight force their way into the Tongue. Little things may be easily suppress'd, or Great ones that are believ'd with a lazy and imperfect Faith, but 'tis impossible that such things so believ'd should be kept to a Man's self. No, he will be so full of them, and so big with them, that he will even travail with the uneasy Burthen, and be in Pain till he be deliver'd of it. The great things of the other World will be like Fire within him, and will so warm and inflame him with their Heat, and so dazzle and overflow him with their Light and Glory, that he will be no more able to forbear talking of them, than St. Stephen when he look'd steadfastly into Heaven, and saw the Glory of God, and Jesus standing on his right Hand, could forbear crying out (tho' he knew he should further enrage his Enemies, and forfeit his Life by it) Behold, I see the Heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Such irresistible

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Force and Efficacy have the great Objects of Religion as well upon the *Tongues* as upon the *Hearts* of Men, when they are set before them in the next view, and displaid in a full Light, by that Faith which is the Substance of things hoped for, and the Evidence of things not seen.

FOR I consider again that this actual and lively Faith supposed to be in him that has this great Sense and Impression of Religion upon him, will not only ravish and transport him with the glorious and beatific Views of the other World, but will also (even by so doing) Eclipse, Extinguish, and utterly Annihilate all that we call great and considerable in this. The Earth seems but as a Point to a Mathematical Eye, and what then will it appear to the Eye of such a steddy and intent Believer? Why even just Nothing. He sees its mighty Frame dissolving, and all its Pomp and Glory vanishing and disappearing, or rather he does not see it, but overlooks it, glances his piercing Eye beyond it, and casts it into a *Shade*, making it no part of his enlarged Prospect. And when the whole World appears to him so inconsiderable, so next to nothing, how flat and insipid, how dead and unmoving must all Discourse of it be to him! and what pleasure can such a one take to talk or be talk'd to an hour or two together about those trifling Subjects that find the Body of Mankind in Discourse, and give Entertainment to most Companies, and what a Pennance must it be to his Spiritual and high-set Ear to be condemn'd to such Impertinence! And yet he cannot be wholly Silent neither, but must even to keep himself awake, talk of something, and what should that be, since all Worldly Subjects are so unsavoury

unsavoury to him, but of the great things of Religion, whereof his Heart and Head too are full, and which employ both his Meditation and his Affection.

I say *Affection*. For I further consider that Love is so talkative and Self-betraying a Passion that it cannot well be conceal'd when in any considerable degree. Upon which Account, as well as some others, it is deservedly compared to *Fire*. 'Tis a Fire that not only burns, but flames out, and discovers it self by its own Light. Love is more capable of Hypocrify, than of Disguisement, it being more easy to pretend and counterfeit it where it is not, than to conceal it where it is. A Man may indeed without much difficulty, dissemble his Hatred, or his Envy, or his Malice, or even his very Anger; and 'tis no very rare thing to meet with a sort of People that have the Art so to manage their Resentments, as to smile in a Man's Face at the very time when they are the most bitterly affected towards him, and would do him the greatest Mischief. But Love will not be so managed, but like Lightning will break through all Restraints till it either finds or makes a Passage. 'Tis so we know in all Worldly Objects, the Love of which is quickly known in those who have a Tongue to express it (which in these Cases at least) is always observ'd to be a true Index of the Heart. How easy a Matter is it to find out a *Lover* by an Hour's Conversation with him! And how quickly does a *Coverous* Person betray himself, who can indeed hide his Money, but not his Love of it. For how feelingly and sensibly and cordially does he talk of it himself, and with what a true *Gusto*, and *luscious* Re-

lish does he hear it talkt of by others ! How often are Bills and Bonds, Principle and Interest, Leases, Fines and Mortgages in his Mouth, and how does he even shake and tremble all over whenever he pronounces the Sacred Name of his dear Idol, so that you may easily feel how the Pulse of his Heart beats, by the Motion of his Tongue. And why then should not the Love of God and of Religion be as active and powerful as that which is Worldly, or Sensual ? Without question it would if it were in the same Degree, and did Men but love God and Heaven at the same rate as Misers do the World (and I hope there are some that do so, and a great deal more) they would be as forward to talk of these great things, as the others are of the little Objects of their vile Passion. For why should the Divine Lover be the only One that's ashame of his *Best Affection*, and unwilling to talk of the Delight of his Heart ?

ESPECIALLY when 'tis further consider'd that the excellent Person we are now speaking of, who has so great a Sense of Religion, and lives under so Governing an Impression of it, has not only a great Love and Relish of Piety, but also a great deal of Charity for his Neighbour, and withal no less a Zeal for the Honour and Glory of God, which two last will be of as much Force to determine him to Religious Discourse upon the Account of his Brother's Edification, as the former was to discharge himself of a full Burthen, and for the ease of his own Heart and Mind. So that every way it seems not only Natural, but even necessary and unavoidable that those who are very Good indeed, great Proficients in Piety, mature Saints, should frequently Discourse of Good things, however

however Christians of a lower Form, and lesser Age, *Infants in Religion* may not be yet arrived to the use of their Speech.

AND does not the Scripture here also strike in with Reason when it makes Religious Discourse so considerable an Ingredient in the Character of a Good Man? For says the Royal Prophet of himself, and such as himself, *Psal. 119.* *I will speak of thy Testimonies even before Kings, and will not be ashamed.* And says his Wise Son, *Prov. 10. 11, 21.* *The Mouth of a Righteous Man is a Well of Life,* not a standing Pool, but a Well, that is always springing and rising up, *and the Lips of the Righteous feedeth many,* that is to be sure with good and wholesome Discourse. And this the Prophet *Malachi* represents not only by way of Character, as a thing that should be, but as matter of fact, as the actual Practice of the Good Men of his time. *Mal. 3. 16.* *Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before him, for them that fear'd the Lord, and thought upon his Name.* And, to add no more, our Saviour tells us in plain Words, *Mat. 12. 35.* *that a Good Man out of the Good Treasure of the Heart bringeth forth Good things.* And to the like purpose elsewhere, *Mat. 13. 52.* he compares a Good and a Wise Man to an Houholder, which bringeth forth out of his Treasure things New and Old, that is, produces out of his rich Stock of Knowledge and Goodness variety of Spiritual Matter for the Entertainment and Edification of those that Converse with him.

AND thus you see both from Reason and Scripture that however the moderately Good and Vertuous may be discouraged from the Practice

of Religious Discourse, yet those that are eminently so, that are very much under the Power and Sense of Religion, will shew it by their good Words as well as by their good Works, upon all Occasions making Ladders from Earth to Heaven, and seasoning their Discourse with that Divine Salt, without which nothing can be grateful and savoury to a truly Pious and Christian Palate. But then if all very good Men will conduct and order their Conversation thus, I leave it to be concluded by the way, considering how little good Discourse there is going, what a Few very good Men there are in the World. These indeed were always very thin Sown, but never certainly so thin as now, and accordingly never was Religion so little talkt of as Now. Disputed it is enough, perhaps too much, but as for serious and practical Discourse of it, such as comes from a Principle of Goodnes, and tends to the promotion of it, I think 'tis almost quite laid aside. And yet some few there are upon whom the Divine Spirit does yet descend in Tongues of Fire, who are both Burning and Shining Lights, have both Devotion and Courage enough to utter the wonderful Works of God, and whose Communication (as the Son of *Sirach* advises C 9. v. 15.) is in the Law of the Most High. And these are they that bear up the sinking Foundations of the Moral World, that keep Life and Breath in the Body of languishing and dying Piety, that maintain a sense and remembrance of it in the Minds of Men, who would otherwise forget what Religion meant. And as the number of these Holy and Righteous Persons shall either increase or decrease, so in all

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Human probability will the Tide of Religion (now almost at lowest) either Ebb or Flow.

I see now nothing further wanting to the Intireness of this Discourse, unless it be to lay down some Rules and Directions for the better Management of our Religious Conversation. Whereof the First that I would commend and have observ'd is this,

*Directions for
the Ordering
our Religious
Discourse.*

1. *Never to talk of Religion but when you think of it.* 'Twere well if you thought of it some time before hand by way of Preparation, but that you do so at the very time when you talk of it, is I think absolutely necessary. The Importance of the Subject is certainly great enough to *demand* this Caution, only perhaps it may be thought too great to *Need* it. But that's a Mistake, for there are a sort of People in the World that have such a lazy, unthoughtful, listless, yawning way of talking of Religion, that one would almost think they talked in their Sleep. They have a Road of Pious Expressions, and are got into a certain Set of good Words, such as *Lord Jesus Christ, What please God, The Lord's Will be done, We are all Mortal*, and the like; which upon all Occasions they go over by rote, just as a Sea-man does his Compass, or rather as a Bell-man does his Godly Rhimes, without thinking what they say, or being at all affected with it. Methinks when I hear such People talk of Religion, I fancy the Chimes going to the Tune of a Psalm. The Truth is, there is but too much resemblance between them, they both go as they are set, and one almost as mechanically

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ly as the other. Only there is this unhappy difference in the Case, that the Bells oftentimes call People to their Devotion, whereas these sleepy, dreaming Talkers of Religion do but make 'em sick of it. Whenever therefore you talk of Religion, in the first place be sure to be *awake*, and to think and consider of what you say. The next thing I would commend, by way of Direction, is,

2. To talk of it *Seriously*, *Gravely* and *Soberly*, towards which the Consideration of what is spoken will be a very great help and advantage. There are two sorts of People that transgress this Rule, in discoursing of Religion; Those that talk of it *Irreverently*, and with a loose and careless Air, as if they thought it a trifle, hardly Worthy of spending their Breath about it; and those that talk of it *precisely*, after a canting, whining and sighing manner, with an affected Tone, and an ill-contrived Look, as if they were conjuring or telling Fortunes rather than discoursing of Holy things. Now tho' these are Persons of a Character very different from one another, yet I think they both agree in this, that instead of advantaging the Interest of Religion, they do but prostitute, profane and make it cheap, and set the taste of those of good Sense against it, who cannot endure to see so serious and sacred a thing as Religion is, either unhallow'd, or ridicul'd. I would therefore have Religion talk'd of, First reverently and seriously, in Opposition to the Way of the *Libertine*; and then gravely and soberly and manly, in Opposition to that of the *Pharisee*, without any sighing, or winking, or catching the Breath, or *Skrewing* up the Mouth, or any other fantastick *Affectionations*. For all this is but the *Grimace* of Religion

Religion, such as is forc'd and put on by those that have it not in its true Power and Spirit, and which those that have it do not find Occasion or Inclination to use. For intending only to express what they feel, and what really passes in their Souls, they content themselves with the Natural way of doing it, which is simple and plain; whereas the other not speaking from an inward fund of Goodness, but being only to act a part, are apt (as having no certain Measure) to overact it, and so run into Affectations. The substance and intendment therefore of this Rule, in short is, *So to Talk of Religion, as not to betray the Want of it by your Talk.* For another Direction I would commend

3. THAT Religion be discours'd of *Practically*. And that both as to the Matter, and as to the Manner, wherein I intend to exclude the Way of *Notion*, and the Way of *Contention*, the former not tending much to the promoting of *Edification*, and the latter being always an hindrance to it. When we talk of Religion we should remember the Design of it, and accordingly Discourse of it not *Notionally* and *Speculatively*, nor yet *Wranglingly* and *Contentiously*, either to shew our own Skill in Arguing, or to try another's, but *Cordially* and *Spiritually*, *Christianly* and *Devoutly*, after a plain, hearty and affectionate Manner, so as to answer the ends of that *Charity* which *Edifies*, and not of that vain *Knowledge* which puffeth up. *Controversies* do but little good even in *Writing*, wherein *Victory* is oftner sought than *Truth*, but much less when managed by the Tongue, there being but very few that have either *Art* enough to talk *Closely*, or *Temper*

per enough to talk Calmly upon those short Views, and that very broken and transient Consideration of the Subject which are allow'd in the way of Oral Discourse, especially in Common Conversation. And there is nothing more indecent than to see People grow Warm and out of Humour, much more to be noisy and clamorous, and in a Passion abour Religion. 'Tis indeed unbecoming enough at any time, or upon any occasion, but never does it sit worse upon Men than when they make that the Subject of their fierce Contentions, which ought to be the Cure of them. But to give Religion yet a further Advantage from our Mouths 'twere well if Care were taken,

4. *THAT* it be discours'd of *Seasonably*. The Wise Man tells us that to every thing there is a Season, and withal that every thing is beautiful in its Time. Not that it can ever be out of Season to do good, but only that there are some Seasons and Circumstances wherein Discourses of Religion are not so apt nor likely to do it. And these Seasons ought carefully to be avoided, and fit and proper ones Chosen for this purpose. For there is Prudence and Management in all Things, and if we make choice of a convenient time to give Physick to a Man's Body, much more should we when we administer to his Soul. And that I call a convenient time, when 'tis likely Men will be the Better for what is said to them, let it be when it will. For there are times again when Men are not likely to be the Better, but rather the Worse, and to talk Religion to them then, is both to spill your Physick and to injure your Patient. Upon which Consideration perhaps it would not do so well to fall aboard a Man abruptly

ly, and chop down right into a Discourse about Religion with him, without some occasion or other, either Naturally offer'd, or Artificially contriv'd. For that looks either like Pharisaical Ostentation of Religion on your side, or as if you thought the Person you bespeak in too great a necessity of such an Application. Neither of which can be very acceptable to him. No, there are ways of Address and sweet Insinuation that may be used both more acceptably, and more successfully, whereof we have variety of Instances in the Conversation of our Saviour Christ, and particularly in his intercourse with the *Woman of Samaria*. Again, For the same reason tho' there be occasion offer'd perhaps it would not be so convenient to take hold of it in a great and promiscuous Company, whose Tempers and Humours you know not, lest they should be more offended with your shew of Ostentation, than Edify'd with the real Goodness of your Discourse. Nor again it may be would a Wise Man be very free of Religion at a publick Feast, when besides the Number and the Mixture of the Company, People are commonly dispos'd to greater Freedom and Pleasantry than is consistent with the Gravity of such serious Discourses. Nor again would I have Religion mingled with our *Sports*, nor with the Hurry and Noise of *Business*, nor with our *Drink*. For what an Odd thing would it be to hear a Man come out bluntly with Religion, or begin a Discourse about Heaven when he is a Hunting and the Dogs at full Cry, or when he is dealing and trading upon the *Exchange*, or when he is making himself cheerful in a Tavern. I say *Chearful*, for tho' he be not Drunk, yet Religion and

and a Bottle make but a very indifferent Mixture, insomuch that the Indecency of it is got into a Proverb, which forbids *Preaching over one's Glass*. But there is another sort of mingling of Religion, and that is when we sow and scatter it here and there among our Worldly Talk, without observing due distances between them, after the manner of those who will talk a little of Religion, and then a little of News, Business or Fashions, and then a little of Religion again; so Chequering and Interlacing their Discourse with these two extremely different Subjects. But this is an unbecoming Mixture, and such as does not well comport with the Dignity of Religion, whose Sacredness implies *Separation*; and requires it should be discours'd of alone, and by it self. We are also to consider to whom we speak, and not talk Religion to a Man that is Drunk, or in a great Passion, or who professedly Scoffs and Laughs at all Religion, and those that talk of it, making them both the Object of his Mockery and Ridicule. For this would be in our Saviour's Expression, to cast Pearls before Swine, which one would not do, not only for the value of the Pearls, but also out of some Pity and tender regard to the Swine too, considering how much our good Discourses will inflame the Reckoning, and aggravate the Condemnation of those wicked Wretches, whom they do not amend, or by Accident make worse. The short then of this Rule is, that we take Care so to Time, Accommodate, and Circumstantiate our good Discourses that they may really do good, and make those to whom they are Address'd the Better for them. Which Caution ought more particularly to be observ'd in that

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Nicer and more Delicate part of Religious Discourse, which consists in *Reproof* and Brotherly Admonition, for which (as being an ungrateful Work and Labour of Love) the softest and most favourable Seasons are to be sought out, the *Mollia Tempora Fandi*, when Men are most treatable and best disposed, most sedate and recollected, and when this harsher Physick will Work most kindly with them. And for this we have the Example of God himself, who seems to have used the like Address towards the first Offender, chusing to treat with him about his Miscarriage not immediately upon the Commission of it, when his Passions were up, and his Soul ruffled and discomposed, but, as is most probable, at some convenient Distance, and after some time of Recollection, when the Sediment of his troubled Spirit was fallen, and the Regions of his Soul pretty well cleared up, *in the Cool of the Day*. I shall now add but one Direction more concerning the Management of Religious Discourse, and that is,

5. To join along with it the great Advantage of a good Life, which will give Weight to our Words, and Attention to our Hearers, and is it self, whether in the Pulpit or out of it, the best Eloquence. With this, nothing so mean or ordinary can come from us but what will carry a Grace and an Authority with it, and will be well accepted. But without it though we speak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels, we shall be but as a sounding Brass, and a tinkling Cymbal. I say though we *should* so speak. But then again I must tell you, that 'tis no very easy matter for an ill Man to do so. For being a Stranger to the inward Life and Power of Religion he can hardly

hardly be supposed to know enough of it to talk well of it, nor again is it likely he should have Courage enough to speak out all that he knows, because the greatest part of it will recoil upon himself. But suppose he should be able to get over these two Difficulties, yet after all, the best that he can say, will have but little Power to persuade, and that because He says it, who is not himself persuaded by it. If therefore you would have your good Discourse have as good Success, take care that your Hands do not contradict your Tongue, that your Deeds give not the Lie to your Words, and that you live your self as you exhort others. Which Direction, tho' the last set down, is yet the first I would have follow'd.

THERE are some whom if you were to hear talk a little while, and knew no more of them, you would think they were Saints newly dropt from Heaven, and that they had nothing of *Adam* in them. So charmingly set, and Spiritually tun'd are their Tongues, and so Divine and full of Heavenly Air is their Discourse. And thus far 'tis well. But when after having heard their Seraphic Voice a Man shall look down and behold their Cloven Feet, and shall observe that those who talk the Language of *Angels*, do yet hardly live the Life of *Men*, what a Surprize and what a Scandal must such a Discovery be ! I say Scandal, for nothing brings a greater upon Religion than a Hypocrite discover'd. As long as he keeps on his Disguise 'tis well enough, but when that's off, he is like a Sepulchre uncover'd, all over Offence and Abomination, and even Good Men are thought the worse of for his Sake. Those that have once found a pious Talker to be an ill Liver,

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are apt ever after so to join those Ideas together, as to fancy they are all alike ; and will be hardly persuaded to trust a Man of a *Religious Outside* any more. However to be sure He himself will never be thought well of again, and if he should chance to be reform'd in Earnest, he can never hope to convince those that knew him before of the Reality of his Change, it being impossible he should do it by greater Tokens of Sanctity and Professions of Piety than he gave out before when he was known to be no more than a *Pretender*. Such a one therefore he will be ever taken to be, and as long as that Presumption lies upon him, he must not expect to do any good by the most Heavenly Discourses his Head can invent, or his Tongue can utter. His foul Actions will continually baffle all his fine Harangues, and what was impiously alledg'd against our Saviour, will be a just and reasonable Prejudice here, Job. 10. 20. *He hath a Devil, why hear ye him ?*

BUT the truth of it is, these Men were much better let all Discourse about Religion alone, and leave it to shift for it self, than to pretend to stay up her tottering Ark with their unhallow'd hands. They do but discredit and profane it, and bring an ill report upon it, and withal discourage those Few from talking of it who could do it to better purpose, but will not, for fear they should be taken for Hypocrites too, as was remark'd in the Beginning. And besides, one would think it should be a Punishment to them to talk of things they have no true delight in, or Relish for, and which recoil again upon their guilty, and perhaps blushing Faces. However to be sure they can't do it with that open Freedom, that liberal Assurance, and

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and that Ingenious Air which all Discourse about Religion should have, and which a Clear and Good Conscience can only give. Which puts me in mind of a very pertinent Saying of St. Au-

stin, spoken in relation to that Petition of the Lord's Prayer which is by so many turn'd into a Curse upon themselves, *Forgive us our Tresfa-*

*Tom. 8. in
Psal. 103. P.
426.*

*ses as we forgive them that trespass against us. Vis
Securus dicere?* says he, *Fac quod dicis.* Would you say it Securely? then do what you say. And the same I apply to Discourse about Religion. Would you talk of it Securely, with true Freedom and Assurance, without any secret Checks or faint-hearted Mis-givings? The Rule is both short and infallible, *Fac quod dicis,* Do what you say. Practice as much of Religion as you Talk, and then you have a full Licence to Talk as much of it as you please.

Securus dicere? says he, *Fac quod dicis.* Would you talk of it Securely? then do what you say. And the same I apply to Discourse about Religion. Would you talk of it Securely, with true Freedom and Assurance, without any secret Checks or faint-hearted Mis-givings? The Rule is both short and infallible, *Fac quod dicis,* Do what you say. Practice as much of Religion as you Talk, and then you have a full Licence to Talk as much of it as you please.

A

DISCOURSE

OF THE

Fear of DEATH.

HEB ii. 15.

-----*And deliver them who through fear
of Death were all their Life-time
Subject to Bondage.*



ND sure there are none that have more need of a Deliverer, or that are with more Difficulty deliver'd, than the Persons of this Character and Condition. For as of all the Evils incident to Human Life there is none greater than the Fear of Death (for even Death it self may not be compared with it) so also there is none more Natural and Necessary, and Consequently more difficult to be either prevented or removed. The Fear of Death is just as Natural as the Love of Lite, and nothing less than Death it self can wholly silence either of these Passions. That

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indeed is so intire and so thorough a Divorce that it not only disunites the Soul from the Body, but from the Love of it too ; and by that at once cuts off all the ties that fasten us to the Corporeal and Sensible World, which we cannot be perfectly loosen'd from as long as we are united to our own Bodies ; But there is nothing else that I know of that has Power enough to make us wholly out of love with Life, and consequently utterly to rid us of the Fear of Death. Not to Fear Death therefore at all, a Man had need actually **Die**, or be **Dead**, for so long as he **Lives**, so long as he is united to his Body, and by that to a sensible World, which by the General Order of Nature gratifies and entertains all those Powers of Sensation which are at present awaken'd in him, and so gives some Rest and Repose to his **Natural Desire of Happiness**, so long he must needs fear Death, if 'twere upon no other account than as 'tis a dissolution of Life, and of that **Natural Sweetness and Pleasure** that attends it. So that the Fear of Death seems to be like some of those inveterate Cleaving Diseases that are so lodged and radicated in the Blood and Spirits, so incorporated as it were into the very **Habit** and **Constitution** of the Body, that they cannot be put off but when that is, and are **Curable** only by **Death**, the *Universal Remedy*.

It lies indeed very hard upon Man, and 'tis what renders his Condition in this World very pitiable, that an evil which is so great in it self (as the Fear of Death is) should withal be so difficult to be removed. That that which be-clouds the Light of his Mind, and is of it self enough to disrelish the whole Comfort of his Life, should be so

so close an Attendant to both, and that what makes a Man so burthensom and uneasy to himself, should be as inseparable from him as himself. But thus it is, and the same may be said in proportion concerning the other instances of his Misery as well as this. The Lesser Evils of Human Life have many and cheap Remedies, and are cured as easily as they might be born, while in the mean time those which are less Supportable are (to complete the Misery of Life, and if possible, to wean us from it) at the same time less Curable. But as there is no Temporal Evil less supportable, when in Extremity, than the Fear of Death, so there is none less Curable than that.

THE Greatness of this Evil, and the Difficulty of its Cure have made Life a very great Misery to some Men, and truly a very Mixt, Insincere, Questionable Blessing to all, and both together have drawn down Pity and Compassion from Heaven, and made it an undertaking worthy of the Son of God to relieve poor Mortals in some Measure from an Evil which they are so little able to bear, and less able to remove, that so the Burthen if not absolutely taken off, might yet be somewhat lightned, and better proportion'd to the Shoulders that were to stand under it, and that as far as was Possible *this bitter Cup might pass from us.* By the way we may guess at the Magnitude of the Disease from the Nobleness of the Remedy. Too Noble indeed for a Creature, if one of less value would have served the turn. But such was the Stubbornness of the Fatal Evil that it would yield to no less Sovereign application, and such the Goodness and Mercy of God that he thought it not too Good, but would rather

his own Son should once taste of Death, than that Man should always live under a constant dread and fearful expectation of it. For it seems it was one part of the wonderful undertaking of Christ to deliver Men from the Fear of Death as well as from the Evil Consequences of it, as we may here learn from the Apostle, who speaking of this undertaking of Christ, tells us, *That forasmuch as the Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.* And that to a double End or Purpose. 1. *That through Death he might destroy him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil.* Which denotes more immediately our Deliverance from the evil Consequences of Death. And 2. (as in the Words of the Text) *That he might deliver them who through Fear of Death were all their life-time Subject to Bondage.* Wherein is express'd our deliverance from the Fear of Death, which is here made a part of our Saviour's undertaking for Mankind, and Particularly mention'd as one of the powerful Motives that drew him down from Heaven to take upon him our Nature, and to suffer in it.

WE have here the Fear of Death, the Bondage to which this Fear Subjects Men, and the Deliverance from this Fear and from this Bondage.—
And deliver them who through Fear of Death were all their life-time Subject to Bondage. So that the Words do upon the first View point out to us these Three Subjects of Discourse.

FIRST, *The Fear of Death.*

SECONDLY, *The sad effect of this Fear where it is predominant.*

THIRDLY,

THIRDLY, *The Remedy of Both.*

FIRST, *Of the Fear of Death.* This in General is either *Natural* or *Rational*. By the *Natural* Fear of Death, I mean that which prevents all Reason and Discourse about it, as not depending upon any thing without, but resulting wholly from the inward Frame and Constitution of our *Natural* Being. By the *Rational* Fear of Death I here understand that to which we are not pre-determin'd by any *Natural* Prevention or Instinct, but which is purely grounded upon Reason; by that Meaning, not precisely right or solid Reason, but all or any such Motives or Arguments as our Reason shall offer and present to us indifferently, whether they are Solid or Not.

WHICH Fear of Death however it may be often found to be *Irrational* upon a true account and estimation of things, there being not perhaps sufficient Ground for it, may yet be very properly call'd a *Rational* Fear in the Sense that I now use the word *Rational* in, as 'tis opposed to that *Natural* Fear of Death which has no Reason or Argument, but mere Nature for its Foundation. I shall discourse of these two Fears distinctly.

1. THERE is a *Natural* Fear of Death in Men, which is not an Original but a derivative Passion, resulting from the *Natural* Love of Life. We naturally fear Death because we naturally love Life.

So that this Passion is only a Consequence of the other, or rather but a different way of expressing it.

If it be demanded why there is such a Passion as the Fear of Death, or rather as the Love of

Life in our Natures, I answer for many wise Ends and important Reasons, these two especially.

1. **T H A T** Man might persevere to *Live*.
2. **T H A T** he might *Live in Society*.

1. **T H A T** he might persevere to *Live*, that he might continue in his present State, and abide in the Station wherein God had placed him, and not upon the account of any Trouble or Pain (whereof he is like to have no want as long as he lives here) Voluntarily quit his Post, till God should be pleased to discharge him. And not only so, but that she should be induced to take care of his Life, and avoid all such Things or Actions as might shorten or destroy it, and use all such Means as are necessary to preserve and prolong it, which he would either Forget or Neglect, or Studioiusly Omit to do were it not for that Pleasure and Sweetness, which is annex'd to Life. Which is almost all the Pleasure that some Men have, who by the Iniquity of their Circumstances may be so far stript of the Particular Enjoyments and Comforts of Life, as to have little more left them than the bare Natural Pleasure and Sweetness of Life in General, were it not for which there would be Nothing in the World to ingage their further Continuance in it.

2. **T H A T** he might live in *Society*. As Man is not a Creature fit to live out of *Society*, so were it not for the Fear of Death he would not be fit to live in it. For though reasonable Creatures ought to be govern'd by Reason, yet in the Posture that Human Nature now stands in Reason alone is too weak a Principle to keep a World of

of Men in Order, whose Corrupt and Irregular Passions would upon all Occasions transport them into great Violences one against another if they had nothing else but mere reason to restrain them. Passion therefore that is not to be govern'd by Reason, must be govern'd by *it Self*, that is, One Passion must be set to Confront and Counterpoise another. And since Rational Creatures will not be order'd in a Rational way, and keep within the limits of their Duty upon the Consideration of Right and Equity, Force must be made use of as a Suppletory to the defects of Reason, and here comes in the Necessity of Civil Government. But now if Men did not Naturally dread and stand in Fear of Death, the Government would have no sufficient hold upon them, or As-cendant over them. But by the help of this Passion they are kept in Awe, and so in Order; which therefore serves as an Instrument of Government, and as an expedient to procure the end of a Socia-ble Life.

I pass now Secondly from the Natural to the Rational Fear of Death. This I shall Consider,

1. As it generally is.

2. As in strict and right Reason it ought to be.

1. As it generally is. It is generally very great. I may say extravagant. There is nothing so much, nor so universally fear'd as Death. Men fear that who fear nothing else, and not only the thing it self, but even the Name of it is terrible, and makes those that hear it tremble. *Death*, there is a terror in the very Sound, and our Blood and

our Spirits do as it were retire from it. Nay even that which carries any Relation to it, or any sensible representation of it, or any way brings it to our Mind, the very *Picture* of it is formidable. The hearing of a Passing-Bell, the Solemnity of a Funeral, the Dress of the Mourners, nay, even the sight of an empty Coffin that has only the Colour of Mortality, strikes us with Horror. And yet these are only some of the Out-guards that make up the Retinue of the King of Terrors. How dreadful then does he himself appear, and how do the greatest Kings and Emperors, nay, what is more, *Philosophers* and *Christians* tremble before him !

SOME Few indeed there are (but they are generally thoughtless and unreflecting Persons) who have little more than the Natural Fear of Death. That indeed they cannot shake off, but as to any dread that arises from Consideration or Rational Apprehensions they have little or nothing of it, but go out of the World almost as unconcernedly as they came in. But these I suppose are instances of a rare Contingency, and I know of nothing but either great *Stupidity*, or extraordinary *Sanctity* that can produce such a degree of indifference and unconcernedness. But for the generality, Men have too much Apprehension, and too little Innocence, to be thus fearless and unmoved at the Approach of Death. They fear it upon rational Views and Prospects, as well as by a Natural Horror, and in this respect the most thoughtful and active Minds are apt to fear it most, as being most capable to survey it in its several Views and Postures, and able to draw the most lively Images and Representations of it.

The better the Imagination here, the brighter the Scenes, and the stronger the Fear. But they that are under the least rational Concern for Death (because indeed they think little about it) fear it however to great degrees, and upon several accounts. For Death has various faces according as the Light is wherein we view it, and every Aspect looks grim, and excites its proper Fear in the Hearts of Miserable Men. Some fear it as 'tis a quitting of the Body, which considering the close Union that is between Body and Soul, they imagin cannot be done without great Pain. Some again fear it as 'tis a leaving of the World, which is loved and enjoy'd with too much Passion to be lost without Trouble and Sorrow. Others again fear it as a thing that indangers their Being, and threatens them with Annihilation. Others as an entrance upon a new and altogether unexperienc'd State and way of Life, which must be now led in a new World, in a new Company, and after a new and strange Manner. And last of all Death is fear'd in respect of those dismal Consequences it draws after it upon the Guilty and ill-affected Soul, whom it delivers over to the just Judgment of God and Eternal Damnation. These are the several Views and Prospects of Death, and the several Arguments upon which Men ground their Fear of it. And so much to represent the Rational Fear of Death as generally it is. But Men being every whit as unreasonable in their *Fears* as in their *Desires*, it will be requisite that we proceed to consider this Rational Fear of Death.

2. As in strict and right Reason it ought to be. Imagination has here very much Swoln and blown.

up

up the Idea of Death, and brought in a very large and frightful Bill of Terrors, but for our Comfort Reason will strike off a great part of the Accompt.

FOR First, 'Tis most Certain that Death ought not in reason to be fear'd upon the account of that *Pain* which is vulgarly presumed to attend the separation of the Soul from the Body. This Fear is unphilosophical, as being founded upon a false Notion of the Union between Soul and Body, which is not (as our gross Imagination is apt to Suggest) by any Contact, Implication, or Cohesion of one of these Substances with the Other, as Bodies are united together, but is only a Mutual Reciprocation of Action and Passion between Soul and Body, which are then said to be United when Certain Motions of the Body depend upon Certain Thoughts of the Mind, and when Certain Thoughts of the Mind follow upon Certain Motions of the Body. This is the Union of Soul and Body according to its *Formal* Notion. The *Cause* of this Union is no other than the general Law or Will of God. The *Condition* of it is such a Certain Temper or Disposition of the Bodily Frame, as suppose, that the Heart be able to send up animal Spirits to the Brain, and that the Brain be able to send them back again by the Nerves into the Muscles for the Motion of the Members. As long as that Mechanical Disposition of the Parts lasts, so long by the Order of God this reciprocation of dependance as to Action and Passion does also last, and when that Disposition ceases, then by the same Order of God this Reciprocation Ceases. And this is what we call *Death*, viz. when such a Spirit has no longer

any

any relation of dependency as to Action or Passion upon such a Body. But now what *Pain* can we conceive to be in this? 'Tis plain that all the Pain is previous, in those preparatory Motions which serve to demolish the *Mechanism* of the Body, which when it has receiv'd its last Indisposition, can no longer affect the Soul with Pain, all relation of dependency being then supposed to be at an End. So that that Pain which we grossly fancy to be in Death upon the Separation of Soul and Body, is really the Pain of *Sickness*, and ought to be reckon'd only upon that Score, and 'tis Certain that many a Man has undergone, and does daily undergo more of this Pain without Dying, than many of those do who Die. And if these Pains are not so mightily fear'd when consider'd as terminating in *Sickness*, why should the Difference of *Death* make them so dreadful, which can add nothing to the *Pain*, whatever it may do besides? So that Death is not to be fear'd upon this first and common Pretence.

NEITHER Secondly, Is it to be fear'd as 'tis a *Leaving of the World*. For besides the Vanity and Vexation of all things here (which will soon make a Wise Man more Sick of the World than of any other Disease) that which we call Leaving the World is only leaving one certain part of it, and that in all probability the meanest part of God's whole Creation. The Meanest in its Natural State and Order, besides that accessory Vanity brought upon the Creature by Sin. *Rom.* 8. 20. And since the Universe is of such an unimaginable extent, and that there is such variety of Mansions in the House of God, shall we be so fond

fond of one Room, and that in all likelihood the worst, as to dread a removal into another Region! For as I said by our leaving the World we can understand no more than our leaving this part of it, where we were born, and bred, and have for some time had our dwelling. So that in this respect to Die is but like being sent Abroad to Travel into a Foreign Country, or, if you would have a Comparison from Nature and Philosophy, like the passing of a Comet out of one Vortex into another. 'Tis not to be exported beyond the Universe into an Empty space, nor to be our selves reduced into a State of *Emptiness*.

FOR Thirdly, As to the pretence of *Annihilation*, 'tis Certain, First, That there is no reasonable ground for any such Suspicion, since both Philosophy and Scripture are so directly against it. But Secondly, If there were, as some Fancy, and more perhaps wish, yet why should this be made an Argument of Fear? Is it such a dreadful thing to be in a state of Indifferency and Neutrality, to be neither Happy nor Miserable? Is there so much terror in *Nothing*? 'Tis a State (if I may call it so) which we have all been in before we were made, and 'tis what we experiment in great Measure every Night, when in a deep and sound Sleep we forget our selves and the whole World, and lose even the Consciousness and Perception of our very Being. And is there any thing so dreadful in this? Or does it make us afraid to repose our Heads upon our Pillows?

THEN Fourthly, As to the Objection of *Novelty* taken from a New Life, New World, New Company

Company and the like, this one would think should rather invite, than terrify us. For would we always dwell here in these Houses of Clay, and be no otherwise than we are, and see no more of the Works of our Great Creator? We are Curious and desirous of Novelty while we live, and are for making New Experiments in Nature, and New Discoveries upon this little Ball of Earth, and are not a little pleased when by the favourable aid of a *Telescope* we have spied out a New Star, or a New Feature in the Face of the Moon, and shall we be afraid of Death because it makes that Instrument Needless, because it presents us with a New Scene, because we shall then Change *States*, *Worlds*, and *Companies*? Ay but to Converse with Spirits.—But wilt not thou then be a Spirit too? And will it not then be as Natural and Suitable to thee to Converse with Spirits, as it is now to Converse with Men? For what is it but Similitude and Proportion that reconciles either? We see that Persons of low Rank and Education are ashamed to be among Courtiers and People of high Degree, who yet Converse freely with one another. So that we may well discount all these several pretences for the Fear of Death out of our Reckoning, and then there will remain only One, *viz.* the sad Consequences of Death in reference to the Judgment of God, and Eternal Damnation. And indeed this is the only thing for which Death ought reasonably to be fear'd, and this carries an infinite Terror with it. Not that Death is always to be fear'd for this (for then indeed our Condition were deplorable) but that whenever Death is Terrible this is the thing that truly makes it so, and the only thing that can rationally

tionally do it. All the rest are but Bugbears to fright Children, this is the only *Rational Terror* in Death. And so the Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. 56. *The Sting of Death is Sin.* As this is that which gives Death all its Power over us: So this is that which makes it truly formidable to us. This is that which arms it with a *Sting*. And 'tis a sharp *Sting* indeed, whereby it wounds Men with *Eternal Pains* hereafter, and with most amazing apprehensions here. Which leads me to Consider,

SECONDLY, *The Sad Effect of this Fear of Death where it is predominant.* Many are the Sad Effects of this Passion, but that mention'd in the Text is that it Subjects those that are under it, during their whole Lives (supposing that they are under it so long) to a State of *Bondage*, to a *Miserable Spirit*, and *Slavish Temper of Mind*. By which the least that we can understand is that the Fear of Death is enough to sownre all the *Sweetness*, and spoil all the *Comfort of Life*, or that there is no tolerable Enjoyment of Life till a Man is got above the Fear of Death. Not therefore to mention the *Throws and Agonies*, the *Distractiōns and Confusions of Mind* that the Fear of Death produces in impenitent and despairing Sinners in their *last Hours*, whereof History and Observation may furnish us with many *Tragical Instances* (though by the way, at the rate that Men live, I wonder there are not more) I shall consider only at present that constant Habitual effect (as I may call it) which it has throughout their whole Lives, that which the Text here takes Notice of, and expresses by their being all their Life-time subject to *Bondage*. The Sense of which I cannot better express

express than I have already in this Proposition ; that there is no tolerable Enjoyment of Life till a Man is got above the Fear of Death.

WHEN once indeed a Man is arrived to this pitch, he may then be said truly to *Live*, and may call Life his own, as being able to relish and enjoy every part of it, but till then his Life may be more properly call'd a Penance, a Torture, a Death, any thing than an Enjoyment. For let a Man's Condition in this World be otherwise never so Fortunate, and the Circumstances of it never so delightsome and advantagious ; let him have his own *Wish* and others *Envy*, let him be never so full of Honours, Pleasures, and Riches, yea, and of *Days* too wherein to enjoy them, yet what Content or Satisfaction will he be able to take in all this, if the whole ends in a dark Prospect, and he has upon him all the while the Apprehensions of an angry God, and the Fears of Death, Judgment and Hell ? With what satisfaction can a Man, whose Mind is fill'd and over-set with these great Ideas, enjoy the most luscious Pleasure that this Life, or this World can afford ? How can he that expects a Miserable *Eternity* relish any of the little Divertisements of *Time* ? How can he that fears he shall enter upon the Portion of the Damn'd immediately after Death, find any Savour in the short Delights of a vain transitory Life ? How can these little Pleasures relish with those mighty Fears, the Pleasures of *Time* with the Fears of *Eternity*, and how can he that apprehends everlasting Sorrows then, find in his Heart to laugh or rejoice now ? *Solomon*, indeed bids *Eccles. 11. 9.* his young Man rejoice in his Youth,

and

and let his Heart cheer him in the Days of his Youth ; but the difficulty is how he shall be able to do this, if at the same time he is to consider what follows, that for all these things God shall bring him into Judgment. How can Temporary Joy and the Apprehensions of Eternal Judgment consist together ! And does not the Wise Man imply by this severe *Irony* that they cannot.

THE Capacity of Man is too narrow to yield a full Attention to two contrary Sentiments, especially if one be so very much stronger than the other ; and we find that actual Pain does always lessen, and if very great, wholly swallow up and drown the Sense of actual Pleasure. For what would the sweetest Strains in Musick signify to a Man in the Extremity of the Stone or Gout ? But now the very Apprehension of an Evil, if very Extraordinary, though *Future*, will fill and ingage the Capacity as much, and sometimes more than the present actual Sense of one that is lesser. And we may guess by our Saviour's Agony in the Garden, at what rate to measure the *Expectation* of an Evil, and how many degrees of *actual* Suffering it may be set against. How then must the Fears of Death and Judgment, and the Wrath of God, not for a few Hours only (as in our Saviour's Case) but for a whole Eternity fill, employ, divide and distract the Capacity of him that is under them, and consequently not only alloy and disgust, but even deaden and make utterly insipid whatever would otherwise be savoury and relishing in his Life, and diffuse a general Bitterness through all the Enjoyments of it !

FURTHER,

FURTHER, So vast is the disproportion between Temporal and Eternal, that the bare Contemplation of Eternity, tho' without any relation to Happiness or Misery, as indifferently considered, with respect only to its infinite *Duration*, will bring to Nothing and utterly Annihilate all the Thoughts, and all the Accounts of Time, and make a Man, while he has that immense Idea before him, overlook all the Pleasures and Enjoyments of ten thousand Ages. And how then may we suppose will the Thoughts and Fears of a *Miserable Eternity* damp all the Pleasure, and im-bitter all the Comfort of a Man's whole Life ! I say the Thoughts and Fears of a miserable Eternity, which will lie down with him when he goes to Bed, awake with him when he opens his Eyes, (if we can suppose a Man with those Fears at all to have shut them) rise with him when he gets up, be his constant Companions all the day, and haunt him wherever he is, even in his last Refuge the *Tavern*, whatever he is about, and with whomsoever he converses. And how, do we imagine, shall a Man that has such a black Cloud upon his Mind, that carries such a constant Hell about him, enjoy Life, I had almost said *Endure* it, and not chuse Strangling rather than Life, than such a Life, in the midst of which he may truly say that he is in Death. But if he should make a shift to endure it, yet what a Miserable Slavish Life must such a one lead, under what Bondage must he groan, and how Passionately methinks do I hear him cry, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the*

Terrors of this Death ! Which leads me to Consider,

THIRDLY, and Lastly, *The Remedy both of this Fear and of this Slavery.* The Fear of Death, to resume our former Distinction, is either *Natural* or *Rational.* Against the First of these he must be a bold Empiric that shall undertake to prescribe a Remedy. God has not provided any against the Natural Fear of Death, nor is the thing it self capable of any, and there is great Reason to think that even the Son of God himself was not exempt from it, much less then will he exempt us. But there is a Remedy provided against the Rational Fear of Death. Now this I shall consider,

1. As it is already wrought and effected by Christ, who is here said in the Text to *deliver them who thro' Fear of Death were all their Life-time subject to Bondage.*

2. As it is to be further wrought and completed by every Man for himself.

FIRST, *We have a Remedy against the Fear of Death provided for us already by Christ.* This the Apostle plainly intimates where having said, *that the Sting of Death is Sin,* he immediately adds, *But thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory*
1 Cor. 15. 57. through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Victory, but over what ? Why over Sin immediately, and by that over Death. *For the Sting of Death is Sin.* In the same Measure and Proportion therefore that Christ has deliver'd us from Sin, in the very same he has also deliver'd

ver'd us from Death, and from the Fear of Death. But now he has deliver'd us from Sin, both as to the Power of it, and as to the Guilt. From the Power of Sin by his Grace, and from the Guilt of Sin by his Blood. But from neither actually and immediately, but only in Power and Possibility. For when I say that Christ by his Blood has deliver'd us from the Guilt of Sin, I would not be so understood as if actual Pardon or Justification were the immediate Effect of Christ's Death, for then no Man need fear *dying*, or take any Care how he *lived*, but only that Christ has made Sin actually Pardonable, and has put all Men into a Capacity of being discharg'd from the Guilt of it. And so when I say that Christ by his Grace has deliver'd us from the Power of Sin, I do not mean, neither ought I, that all Men are immediately, and *ipso Facto*, Sanctify'd and made Holy by the Redeeming Grace of Christ, but only that they have a Power and a Capacity given them of becoming so. This therefore being the Measure of our Deliverance from Sin, we must conclude that the same is the Measure of our Deliverance from Death, and that Christ has so far deliver'd us from all reasonable Fear of it, as he has put us into a Capacity of avoiding those sad Consequences of it, for whose sake alone it is justly to be fear'd. And truly they are unworthy of the Redemption of Christ who do not think this a sufficient Deliverance on his Part, and who will not be so grateful as to acknowledge it in those Words of the Apostle, *Thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.* But then this being thus far only a Capacity, which thro' default on our side may ne-

ver be brought into act, will oblige us to look further, and to consider this Remedy.

SECONDLY, *As it is to be farther wrought and compleated by our selves.* Here we strike into a large and beaten Road, and may meet with as many Remedies against the Fear of Death as there are Prescriptions for the Cure of an Ague.

Monsieur Drelincourt. Every one has his Receipt and his Direction, and a certain Writer, of no ordinary Fame, has, to make sure

Work of it, mix'd the Ingredients, and put them all into one Composition. But for my part I know but of one that is Effectual, and that will stand the Test either of a Sick Bed, or of a Sound Mind, and that is a good Life, a clear Conscience, an honest Heart, and a well-order'd Conversation, to carry the Thoughts of Dying Men about us, and so to live before we Dye, as we shall wish we had when we come to it. This is a sure Remedy, and that will certainly do the Work, deliver us both from the Fear of Death, and from the Slavery and Bondage that attends that Fear. As for other Remedies there's no depending upon them, for if they should happen to take away our Fear, yet they do not take away the *Ground* of it, and so prevail not by their own Strength, but by the Weakness of those Minds upon whom they Succeed. But a good Life, like a proper and true *Specific*, strikes at the Cause and Bottom of the Distemper, and removes not only the Fear it self, but the Ground and Reason of it. It disarms Death of its Sting, whereas other Remedies do at the most

most but stupify *our Sense* that we may not feel it. For after all the Arts that shall be used, and all the fine Consolations that shall be address'd against the Fear of Death, it cannot be denied but that Death is truly in it self a terrible and dreadful thing to him whom it finds in an ill State and Course of Life, and that 'tis nothing but a Good and Regular one that can make it otherwise. If therefore you would not Fear Death, you must keep a due distance from Sin, which is the Sting of it, and if you would Die with Comfort you must Live with Care.

AND how infinitely does it concern us all to do so! Every Man knows that he must Infallibly Die one time or other, and when that time comes, he knows withal how different his Sentiments and Apprehensions of things will then be from what they are now, and particularly with what Strength and Vigour of Application he shall then wish he had led his Life well, and made good use of his time. Which if he has not, he must needs know withal what dreadful Agonies and Convulsions of Mind he must then be in, and with what dread and horrour he shall enter upon Eternity. And therefore if 'twere only to avoid this last terrible Plunge, this most frightful and uncomfortable *Exit*, it would be of the most important Concernment to every Man to Live well, so well that he may Die without any other Agonies than those that are Natural, and may at least have *Hope* in his Death.

But are we concern'd only for this last Scene of our Life? Is it of no Consequence to us to pass the whole Course of it with Comfort and Satisfaction?

faction? Is it not the Interest and Concern of every Man to enjoy his Life with Pleasure, as well as to leave it at last without Horrour? Is not every Man concern'd to provide that neither the Desire of Life may imbitter his Death, nor the Fear of Death discomfort his Life? Is not Enjoyment of Life the very Life of it? Yes no doubt it is, and 'tis what all Men desire, and in their several ways endeavour after. But then why don't they take more care to live as they ought, since that only can make them as Happy as they desire? And indeed, considering how certain and unavoidable Death is, how Natural and Necessary it is in some Measure to fear it, and how hard a thing it is to conquer even the *Rational* Fear of it, and what a melancholy Aspect and Disconsolate Influence this Fear has upon the whole Course of a Man's Life, how it damps its Pleasures, and overcasts all its Light and Glory, and that a good Life is the only sure Antidote against this Fear with which no tolerable Enjoyment of Life can consist, I say, considering these things, one would think that every reflecting Man at least, if 'twere only to enjoy Life while he has it, should apply himself to the serious Study and Practice of Religion, and never content himself till by living better and better, and rising higher and higher, he has at length attain'd to such a degree of Christian Piety, as will set him above the Fear of Death. For the short is this, as long as Men fear Death, they will have no tolerable Enjoyment of Life, and as long as they lead ill Lives they will be under a necessity of fearing Death, and therefore as long as they lead ill Lives they will lead very

very unhappy and uneasy Lives, will enjoy neither themselves nor their Friends, neither Solitude nor Company, neither Business nor Diversion, will be too much concern'd for the Future to be able to relish the Present ; in one word, will through *Fear of Death* be all their Life-time subject to Bondage. Which, if it cannot be avoided, is the Life of a Slave only, but if it can, 'tis the Life of a Fool,

Now to God the Father, &c,

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DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

The Extent of Christ's Satisfaction.

MAT. 3. 17.

This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.



HE Great Question among the Philosophers was concerning the *Origin* of Evil, whence and how it came into the World, but it would have been a more concerning Inquiry to have look'd about for a Cure of it, how the Power of Sin in us might be destroyed, and how the Guilt of it might be expiated. Concerning the first of these, Philosophy neither did nor could go any further than certain Moral Rules and Prescriptions, the World having then no notion, but what was very confuse, either of the Nature or of the Necessity of Divine Grace. And as to the Latter, though their early and general Practice of Sacrificing, and the great Stress they laid upon that way of

of Worship seem to imply that they had some Notion of the Vindictive Justice of God, and that some Atonement or other was necessary to appease it, yet in this they came short (which was also the Defect of the Jewish Religion) that the Sacrifices with which they fatted their Altars, were infinitely disproportionate both to the God to whom, and to the End and Purpose for which they were offer'd, and so (as the Author to the Hebrews speaks) *could never make the Commers thereunto Perfect*, it being impossible, as the same inspired Pen assures us, that the *Blood of Bulls and Goats should take away Sins.*

THE World had ever some secret Sense of the Necessity of an Atonement by Sacrifice to expiate for their Sins, but was utterly at a loss what to offer. *Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord,* is a Question that the Light of Nature might prompt a Man to move, but to which it could never return a proper Answer. And well may Man be at a stand to find out a Sacrifice worthy of God, when the whole Creation will not suffice for it. Nothing is worthy of God but God himself, and he must either want Satisfaction, or a Divine Person must give it. The Sacrifices of the Heathen and of the Jews, though of different Value and Efficacy, had yet both this common Defect, that they could not avail to a final and thorough expiation of any one Sin, and though God be sometimes said to smell a Sweet Savour in the latter of these, and to accept them among other Instances of Religious Homage, yet he was so far from being fully satisfied by them, or acquiescing in them, that even while he commanded them as *Services*, he refused them as *Satisfaction.*
Sacrifices

Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings thou woul'dst not, then said I, Lo, I come. His own beloved Son was the only Oblation that could deserve the Name of a Sacrifice by fully answering the Demands of his Justice, and withal the only Priest that was worthy to offer it, and in him it is that God after so many ineffectual Slaughters, so many *Vain Oblations*, declares himself at length fully satisfy'd and intirely pleased, and that by a solemn Voice from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*

THE Words are that Illustrious Testimony given by God the Father concerning his Son Jesus Christ at two very remarkable Times, First at his Baptism in the River Jordan, and ^{2 Pet. 1. 17.} again at his Transfiguration upon Mount Tabor, where, as says St. Peter, *He receiv'd from God the Father Honour and Glory, when there came such a Voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* St. Peter concludes from hence the certainty of the Christian Faith, of that Gospel which the Apostles Preach'd, and indeed it is a sufficient Argument of it, as proving both that Christ was the Son of God, the true Messiah that was to come into the World, and that God was fully satisfy'd in his Person and in his Undertaking, which are the two great Fundamentals of Christianity. The first of these lies in the former Clause of the Text, *This is my Beloved Son*, the Second in the latter, *in whom I am well pleased*; that is, whom I not only love and delight in as to his Person, but also perfectly accept as Mediator to satisfy my Justice for the Sin of Man, and for whose

whose Sake I am reconciled to him, and ready to bestow both Grace and Glory upon him. So that here are two very great Subjects of Discourse that do arise from the Words, the former part of which might give me occasion to assert the Messiahship of Christ, in opposition to the Jews, who do not acknowledge it; and the latter to give an Account of his Satisfaction in opposition to some Christians who either *Deny*, or *Misconceive* it. The former of these has been already so abundantly establish'd against the Jews by Christian Writers, that I think I need not ingage in it. I shall therefore dismiss it with this short Remark, That since there cannot be a greater attestation of the Truth of any Prophet's Mission than an immediate Voice from Heaven, had not Christ really been what he pretended to be, 'tis not conceivable that God who is a God of Truth would have honour'd him with such a Testimony. If we could imagin that he would have concurr'd with him in his mighty Works upon *Earth*, yet sure we cannot that he would thus miraculously testify of him from *Heaven*, had he been an Impostor. A Testimony so compendious and so decisive, that it both excells and supersedes all others, whether Humane or Divine. And accordingly we find that our Saviour appeals to this as his greatest Credential. *If I bear witness of my self, says he, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not Testimony from Man. I have greater witness than that of John.* And here he mentions two, his Miracles, and his Father's Attestation.

The

The works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me, and the Father himself which hath sent me hath born witness of me; truly indeed and sufficiently by the Voice of his Prophets, which yet breath'd in the Writings of the Old Testament, but never so remarkably and immediately as by his own Voice from Heaven, when he said, This is my Beloved Son. And what need we any further Witness of the truth of our Saviour's Mission, when we have one from Heaven that expressly assures the World that he was the Beloved Son of God, which he could not have been had he been a Seducer, since the God of Truth cannot in any wise be a Lover of Imposture and Deceit.

*T*HUS much therefore shall suffice concerning the Truth of our Saviour's Mission, gather'd from the former Clause of the Text, *This is my Beloved Son.* Whence I proceed to the Consideration of his Satisfaction express'd in these Words, *in whom I am well pleased.* This Complacency which God the Father here expresses in his Son Jesus Christ, tho' truly applicable, is not I presume to be confined to his own Person, but to be extended to others for his sake, and upon his Account, and if

Traite de la Nature et de la Grace. we will admit the Hypothesis of a very extraordinary Pen, it may be extended to all the Works of God, which according to our Author, could neither have been at first created, nor could afterwards subsist but only with respect to Jesus Christ, whose Incarnation therefore was (upon this Supposition) Necessary, if 'twere only by the Dignity of his Person to Sanctify the Works of God, and render them truly worthy of their Author.

Author. As if all that Complacency which God took in the Works of his Hands, when upon a review he pronounc'd them Good, were founded, not upon their own proper work, (for as such they were not worthy of the Action whereby they were produced) but upon that Relation which they bore to Jesus Christ, in whom only they become acceptable to God, and were it not for whose sake they could neither have been at first, nor would now any longer be. Which Notion, I must confess, seems mightily to be favour'd by all those Places of Scripture (and they indeed are many) which represent all things as made by and for Jesus Christ, and as having also their Subsistence in and by him. But leaving this Notion to stand or fall by its own Measures (for I shall not wade so far out of my depth as to determine any thing in so nice a Matter) I shall chuse rather to understand the Complacency in the Text, as St. Peter seems to do, in reference to Man only, and that not consider'd as a Creature, but as a Sinner, and as by his Sin estranged from, and engaged in a State of Enmity with God, who however he might at first delight in him, even without respect to Christ, before he had defaced that Divine Image which he had graven upon him, yet he cannot now be pleas'd with him but in his Son. So that *well pleas'd* here being supposed to relate to Man as a *Sinner* will signify the same as *Reconciled*, and when God says, *This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*, it comes to as much as if he had said, This is He whom I constitute and accept as Mediator to satisfy my Justice for the Sin of Man, and to work a Reconciliation betwixt us, and for whose sake I am, and declare

declare my self fully Reconciled to him. According as 'tis said, that he has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and again, that he has made us accepted in the Beloved.

2 Cor. 5. 18. Eph. 1. 6.

THE thing therefore that will hence offer it self to our present Consideration, is, the Satisfaction of Christ, and that Reconciliation wrought by him between God and Man. Which I shall not consider as to the *Truth* of it, nor as to the *Necessity* of it (having nothing to add to what has been already said by our many Learned Anti-Socinian Writers upon these two Heads) but only as to the *Nature* and *Extent* of it, intending to rectify some popular and dangerous Mistakes about it, by giving a clear and exact State of this Question, *viz.* How far Christ has satisfy'd for us, or how far, and in what sense God is said here to be pleased with us, or reconciled to us in his Son.

THIS is what I intend ; only I have one Remark to make upon the two other Heads before I proceed to treat of this, which is, that whereas the Assertors of Christ's Satisfaction divide themselves into two sorts, some holding only the *Truth* of it, and others standing also for the *Necessity* of it, this seems to me a very unnecessary Distinction, and such as at long run will wind up into one Bottom. Those that stand for the *Necessity* of Satisfaction, mean that there is something in the Nature of God that requires that Sin should not go wholly unpunish'd, and that therefore if God will forgive it to the Sinner, he is obliged to punish it in some other Person ; so that God

God cannot forgive Sin without some valuable Consideration or Satisfaction made for the breach of his Laws. To this, those who assert only the Truth of it without the Necessity, return, that God might, if he had so pleased, have remitted Sin *gratis*, without any Satisfaction, only in his *Wisdom* he did not think fit to do it. And herein they both think and are thought to contradict each other, and great Heats and Contentions have been occasion'd by this appearance of opposition. But in my Opinion the difference between them is not so great as to despair of Accommodation, and I believe they are nearer to one another than they think they are. For when those of the *Vindictive* way say that God could not forgive Sin without Satisfaction, they do not mean as to a *Physical*, but as to a *Moral* Power, not that he could not do it, *Absolutely* speaking, but that he could not *Hypothetically* speaking, as a Being acting according to certain immutable Measures of Essential Perfection, in the same Sense, as when we say God cannot lie, which is not at all contradicted by saying that God could do it if he pleased, *Absolutely* speaking, since in that Sense the first do not say he could not, but only that he could not *Hypothetically* speaking, as acting according to the Moral Perfection of his Nature. And do not those of the other side in effect confess the same when they say that God tho' he might have done it if he had pleased, yet did not, all things consider'd, think fit in his *Wisdom* to do it? For need any thing be more impossible than what an Infinitely Wise Being does not think fit to do? And may not such a perfect Agent be very well said not to be able to do whatever he cannot do in *Wisdom*?

Wisdom? There is therefore thus far no Contradiction, one says, God could not pardon Sin, Morally speaking, without Satisfaction, which the other does not affirm; and the other says he could do it, Physically speaking, which the other does not deny. So that here is no Affirmation and Negation in respect of the same, and consequently thus far no Opposition. I say thus far, for tho' both agree in this that God might Absolutely do it, and that Hypothetically he could not, *i. e.* supposing him to act Consistently with the Moral Perfections of his Nature, yet when they come to explain themselves upon this last part, they seem to go off from one another again, and to strike into two different Roads, which yet I believe will be found to meet in one. Both agree in this, that God could not pardon Sin without Satisfaction, all things consider'd, and supposing him to act according to the Perfection of his Nature, and that therefore upon the whole matter, Satisfaction was Necessary: Only here starts up a Nicety, one resolving the Reason of this into the *Justice* of God, and the other into his *Wisdom*. He might have done it, say those of the latter way, if he had pleased; but in Wisdom he did not think fit to do it after a full Consideration of things. But whatever difference there may be in the formal Reasons of *Justice* and *Wisdom* abstractedly consider'd, yet certainly there can be little or none in the Objects of them as they come under the consideration of an infinitely perfect Being. For that which an infinitely wise Being proposing the greatest and noblest Ends, and prosecuting them by the aptest means, and in every respect acting by the best Measures does not after all think fit to do,

do, will be as hardly reconciled to Justice as it is to Wisdom. For if we will compare our Expressions with our Notions of things, what can we possibly mean by God's thinking a thing not fit to be done, or for him to do, but only that it is not a proper Means in order to the great Ends which he proposes, his own Glory, and the good of the Universal System, that it is not fit according to the Order of things and the true Interest of the Reasonable World that such a thing should be, and what is this in other Words, but that it is not just or equitable? So then what God cannot Wisely do, he cannot Justly do, and for God in his Wisdom not to think a thing fit to be done, will come to the same as not to think it Just or Equitable to be done: For what is not, all things consider'd, fit to be done, *Ought* not to be done; and, what ought not to be done, it can never be just to do. And then since God did not in Wisdom think fit to Pardon Sin without Satisfaction, the result will be, that he did not think it a just thing to do it, and consequently could no more do it in *Justice* than he could in *Wisdom*. So that in all the seeming diversity of Opinion, and after all the fierce Contention about this Matter, the same thing is at length intended, and those *Prudential Reasons* so mightily talkt of, and upon which so great stress is laid by some, resolve at last into Reasons of *Justice*. For if God did not in Wisdom think fit to pardon Sin without the Satisfaction of Christ, what is this, but that he saw that such a way of Pardonning Sin was not a fit Means to that end he proposed to himself in the Government of the World: And what can be more unjust in a Goverour, than to do any thing

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against the End of Government? The Result then of the whole will be, that in what sense soever God may be said to Pardon Sin *Freely*, the Satisfaction of Christ after all, is as Necessary to the Remission of Sin, as that God should be *Wise* and *Just*, which I think is Necessity enough, and enough to accommodate this Great Debate.

But after all, those that hold the Truth of Christ's Satisfaction, must, in spite of all their willingness to keep up a Distinction, come over to those that hold the Necessity of it. For besides that 'tis not Conceivable how such an extraordinary Transaction as the Suffering of the Son of God for the Redemption of a Sinful World should be true, if it had not been Necessary, it may further be consider'd that if it be true *de facto* that Christ did Satisfy, then it must be as true that Satisfaction was requir'd, (for where nothing is due, nothing can be paid) and if required, then there could be no Remission without it, which is as much as to say it was Necessary. So that the Truth of Christ's Satisfaction being once granted, its own Nature, without being beholden to other Arguments, will infer the Necessity of it, which therefore upon what Account those should deny who grant the Truth of it (unless it be to gratify the *Socinians* by giving up as much of the Cause as they possibly can) I do not understand. But this I think to be a very dangerous Compliment, and such as will not fail to betray the Cause, unless our Adversaries please to be so Civil too as not to take the Advantage. I shall not Charge any with such an insidious design as to intend to betray that Cause which they pretend to Assert, but this I will be bold to say, that for my

own part I should not undertake to Dispute with a *Socinian* upon that Concession, being verily persuaded that if I once granted him that the Satisfaction of Christ was not *Necessary*, it must be *his* Fault if he did not force me to confess that it was not *True*.

But not to insist any longer upon this Occasional Remark concerning the *Truth* and the *Necessity* of the Satisfaction of Christ (which I here consider not according to their absolute and separate Natures, but only as they relate to each other) I pass now to State the Extent of it, by shewing how far Christ has satisfy'd for us, or how far and in what Sense God is said here to be pleased with us, or reconciled to us in his Son. *This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Well pleased sounds very high, and can import no less than a full and thorough Satisfaction, that we are fully and perfectly reconciled to God in Jesus Christ. And so the Scripture every where expresses it. In Conformity to which our Church says in the Prayer of Consecration, speaking concerning the Death of Christ upon the Cross, that *he made there by his one Oblation of himself once offer'd, a full, perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World.* Sufficient no doubt as far as was intended; but the great Question is how far or to what degree that was? Upon the right Resolution of which Question the general Idea of *Practical Christianity* will in great Measure depend.

SOME extend the Satisfaction of Christ so far as to make actual Pardon the immediate Effect of it, as if we were *ipso facto* deliver'd by his Dying for us, which is what they understand by the Re-

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demption of the World. But this at first view appears to be a false Hypothesis, because then as many would be Pardon'd as Christ died for, that is all Men, and that without any thing to be done by way of Condition on their part, which would at one blow dissolve all the Obligations of Good Life, and intirely defeat the *Great Mystery* of *Godliness*. But because this Mistake is founded upon another concerning the Sufferings of Christ, whom these Men will have to have undergone all the Punishment that was due to our Sins, and so in the very extremity of the Notion to have paid the *Last Farthing* for us, I think it Necessary to consider a little the Nature of Christ's Sufferings, and that the rather, because till it be known what that was which Christ Suffer'd for us, we cannot well determine what the Advantage is which thence accrues to us.

THERE are (as I have already hinted) who thinking they can never enough Exalt the Passion of Christ, will have him to have Suffer'd, not only for us, and in our Room, but the very self-same that we were to have done, and deserv'd to do, and so to have paid a rigid Satisfaction to the Divine Justice. But it is evident that Christ neither did nor could thus Suffer for us. That he *did not* is plain, because his Sufferings were *Temporary*, whereas ours ought to have been *Eternal*. And that he *could not* is as plain, not only from his incapacity of suffering Damnation, which in the Nature of it involves Desperation; but also because had his Sufferings been in all other respects never so much the same with ours, yet their being undergone not by us, but by another in our Room, was enough to hinder what he underwent from

from being the very same that the Law required. For (to use the Words of a very Learned Person upon this Occasion) *that takes no notice of any other than the Persons who had Sinn'd, and if a Mediator could have paid the same, the Original Law must have been Disjunctive*, viz. that either the Offender must Suffer, or another for him. *But then the Gospel had not been the bringing in of a Better Covenant, but a performance of the old.* The Force of which comes to this, that since the Original Law did not admit of a Mediator (as not being Disjunctive) though we should suppose the Punishment of Christ to have been otherwise never so much the same with what we were to have undergone, yet its not being undergone by us but by another for us, the very *Commutatio Personæ* was enough to make it to be a Punishment of a different Nature from that which was required by the Law, whereof the very admission of a Mediator was a Relaxation, and indeed the First Act of God's Indulgence whereby he departed from the Rigour of the Legal Sentence, which yet could not be said to be *Moderated* if Christ had so rigorously satisfy'd the Demands of it as some Imagine. Besides that if he had done so, God could not have refused such a Satisfaction, consequently Pardon and Justification must have follow'd upon it *ipso facto*, immediately. Nor could our Deliverance have been suspended (as we see it is) upon any Conditions; nor lastly, could God have forgiven us any thing as of *Grace*. All which being true Consequences, but false Propositions, 'tis most unquestionably certain that Christ did not suffer that very Punishment which

*Reason of the
Sufferings of
Christ.*

the Law required, and which, for any Provision therein made to the contrary ought to have been inflicted.

IF it be ask't what it was then which he suffered? I answer, that if the Question be concerning the precise Quality and Quantity of the Punishment, I must profess Ingenuously that I cannot tell. What the Ingredients of his Bitter Cup were, *God* that mix'd them, and *himself* that drank them only know, though we have reason to think that it was no ordinary Infliction that could overwhelm his Soul with such a Flood of Sorrow, dissolve his Body into a Sweat of Blood, and at last extort that strange Exclamation from him, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* More particular I dare not be, nor is it necessary I should, it being sufficient for the present purpose to conclude that whatever his Sufferings were they were not the very same that the Law required from the Transgressors of it, but only something that in a *Judicial Estimation* was *Equivalent* to that Punishment which was due from them. He is said indeed to have *born our Griefs*, and *carried our Sorrows*, *Isa. 53. 4.* not that they were the very same that we *deserv'd* (for we deserved *Greater*) but only such as were undertaken upon our Account, would answer the Demands of Justice, and all the Reasons and Ends of Punishment full as well, and were truly Equivalent to them; what was wanting in the Duration or Degree of them being abundantly supplied from the Quality and Dignity of the *Patient*, whose Divinity gave Infinite value to his otherwise Finite and Momentary Sufferings, and made his Blood *Infinitely more precious than the Richest Treas'rs.*

sures. According to what Saint Peter says of it, 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. that we were not redeemed with Corruptible things as Silver or Gold, but with the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

But as Precious as it was, it was not the very thing that the Law required, but a *Vicarious Punishment*, not a rigid Satisfaction, but an *Equivalency*. From whence it will follow that it was absolutely *Refusale*, all Dispensation being of Liberty, not of Necessity. And since it was refusale, then as God might not have admitted it, so when he did, it was still at his Pleasure how far he would do so, and with what Conditions he would have it qualify'd. For this is most certain that what God might wholly have refused, he might qualify and limit as he pleased. Whence we may further conclude that actual Remission could not be the *Necessary Effect* of Christ's Satisfaction, nay, that it could have no *Necessary Effect* in respect of *us*, but that as to *us* it was all over Arbitrary, and did wholly depend upon the good Pleasure of God. I say as to *us*. For indeed in respect of God it had *One Necessary and Inseparable Effect*, which was that he might now shew Mercy if he pleased, and that he had it now in his Power (I speak of a *Moral* not *Physical* Power) to Forgive Sin; all Bars and Impediments being now removed out of the way, which either from his Justice or Wisdom might be opposed against it. God therefore was now at full Liberty and had a sufficient Moral Ability to shew Mercy, but whether he would or no, and upon what Terms, must still depend upon his own Will and Pleasure. For since Christ satisfy'd by his Sufferings, and since those Sufferings were

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absolutely refusale, as not being the very same which the Law demanded, it must be that his Satisfaction, which was founded upon those Sufferings, must be as refusale too, and if admitted, must owe its Success to the gracious Acceptance of God, whose just Right accordingly it was to order its Effect, and to determine as he saw fit, how far the Benefit of it should extend. From all which we may gather this Proposition, which may serve as a General Measure in order to the resolution of our present Question, *That the Satisfaction of Christ has, as to us, no other Effect than what it pleased God it should have, or, That it extends no further than 'twas the Will and Pleasure of God it should Extend.*

We have therefore now only to Consider what the Will and Pleasure of God was in this matter. Now to open us a Passage into this we have a Double Key.

1. By Considering what the End and Design of Christ was in his Undertaking for us.
2. What the Scripture (wherein is Reveal'd the Will of God) expressly makes to be the Effect of that Undertaking.

AND First, There can be no better way to Measure the Extent of Christ's Undertaking for us, than to Consider what was his End in that Undertaking, since the End of any Performance is that which must prescribe bounds to all that is done in it. This is Clear. Now as to the End of Christ's Undertaking we need not put our selves upon any Conjectural Reasonings or Divinations, since the Scripture is plain and express that

that it was for the Abolishment of Sin, and for the Promotion and Improvement of Righteousness and true Holiness. So St. John expressly, *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.* Which is equally confirm'd by the Authority of St. Paul, who tells us, that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them. And again, that he gave himself for our Sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil World. And again, that Christ gave himself for his Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and that he might present it unto himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. And again, if it be possible, more fully and clearly, *that he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good works.* I need alledge no more Scriptures, since by these it undeniably appears that the End of Christ's Undertaking for us was the Promotion of Holiness, but if you will have a Testimony from his own Mouth, he himself tells us (who to be sure understood the true design of his coming into the World) that *he came to call Sinners to Repentance.* Well, if so, then the Effect of Christ's Satisfaction must be extended no further than it may serve to this End, no further than it may tend to the encouragement and furtherance of *Repentance.* Whenever it is made to cross this End 'tis a sure sign that 'tis stated amiss,

amiss. Now to this there are two hindrances. 1. When it is in *Vain*. 2. When it is *Needless*. When either Pardon of Sin cannot be had with it, or when it may be had without it. Both which are equal as well as sufficient Discouragements to Repentance. Now the First of these was the Condition we were left in by our falling into Sin, and in which the Mercy and Grace of God found us. Though we could have Repented, it would have been in *Vain*, and to no purpose, Repentance alone without Satisfaction not being sufficient for Pardon. Man therefore in this Supposition had no reason to Repent, and consequently would not endeavour it, being destitute of *Motive* as well as of *Power*. Which was therefore a State utterly desperate, much like that of Hell, wholly forsaken of all Motives to Goodness, and Seal'd up and Condemn'd to all Wick-edness. Here therefore was extreme need of a *Deliverer*. But then if this Deliverer to Remedy the distress of this State should interpose so far as to carry it to the other extreme, by making our Repentance as much *Needless* by his Medi-ation, as without it, it would have been in *Vain*, this would equally Cross and Defeat the Ends of Holiness, and Consequently be an equal Contra-diction to his Great Design. 'Tis necessary therefore to fix the Effect of Christ's Satisfaction between these two. We must suppose him to have done so much for us that Repentance may no longer be in *Vain*, and yet not so much as on the other hand to make it needless. But now this cannot be by supposing Actual Pardon to be the immediate Result of Christ's Satisfaction, for then 'tis visible that Repentance would be alto-gether

ther Needless, as every Means is when the End is already obtain'd. It must be therefore only a Capacity of Pardon ; not an absolute and remote Capacity (for that we had before, and without the help of a Mediator) but a Capacity of Pardon upon *Repentance*, which is enough that Repentance may not be in vain, and yet not so much as to make it needless. And when the Case is brought to this, the great Interest of Holiness (which I have shewn to be the End of Christ's Undertaking) is justly and duly serv'd, there being then all the Reason and Incouragement to Repentance that both the *Successfulness* and the *Necessity* of the thing can give. And in this Order and Adjustment of things I suppose to consist the true *Mystery of Godliness*. I conclude therefore that since the End of Christ's Undertaking as Mediator was the Promotion of Repentance, and since the Extent of it must be such as Comports with that End, and since that End cannot be serv'd but by stating the Effect of his Satisfaction between the two foremention'd Extremes, the true Effect of Christ's Satisfaction was to put us into a *Pardonable State*, that whereas before without the Mediation of Christ, Repentance would not be available to Pardon, now with it it should. Not that we might be pardon'd without it, but only that we might be pardon'd with it. Less than this would have been short of a Deliverance, and more would have been a certain Frustration of his Great End. I conclude therefore that this was the very precise thing that he did for us, to put us into a Capacity of Pardon, into a pardonable State ; that he did so much for us that Repentance

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BUT the Truth of this Account will appear Secondly, by Scripture, as well as from the End and Design of our Lord's Undertaking and Mediation for us. I argue from all those Scriptures which expressly suspend our Actual Pardon and Complete Reconciliation with God upon Repentance. For if Actual Pardon be suspended upon Repentance (and I think I need not bring Quotations to prove that it is) then 'tis most certain that Actual Pardon is not the immediate Fruit and Effect of Christ's Satisfaction (since that cannot be the *immediate Effect* of any thing which does not follow but by the *Mediation* of certain after Conditions) and if so, then Christ by his Satisfaction cannot be supposed to have done more for us than to make Sin *Pardonable*, or to put us into a Capacity of being pardon'd upon Repentance. If he had done more, our Pardon could not have been suspended upon that Condition; but it is suspended upon that Condition, whence I justly conclude that he did no more. And was not that enough? What, would Men have Christ undertake so far for them that they might be pardon'd *without* Repentance? Is it not a sufficient Redemption to be pardon'd *with* it, to have it available? Yes certainly, 'tis more than was indulged to the *Angels* that Sinn'd, and more than the Tenour of the *Law* allows to *Man*, and he is not worthy to have a part in the Redemption of Christ who does not think it sufficient. I conclude therefore that for Christ to have satisfied for us and redeem'd us is only to have procured for us a Possibility of Pardon by Repentance, and for

for God to the reconciled to us in and through his Son, is for his sake to admit us into the very next Capacity of Pardon ; being ready to bestow it upon us immediately upon our turning from Sin to him and his Service. So that all those places of Scripture which speak of our being *reconciled to God by Christ*, of our being *heal'd by his Stripes*, of our being *Redeem'd and Justify'd by his Blood*, and of having through it *Forgiveness of Sins* and the like, must and ought to be understood not of *Actual Remission* (as they seem to sound, and as they are taken by some) but of a *Remissibility or State of Pardon*. In which Sense we are also to understand that Article of our Creed concerning *Forgiveness of Sins*. Wherein we profess to believe, not that Sin is already pardon'd by the Death of Christ (for I know not what Foundation we have for such a Belief) but that he has by the Merit of his Cross, open'd a way for Pardon and Reconciliation, made them possible and attainable by Repentance. So that Sin is said to be pardon'd in as much as 'tis made *Pardonable* by the Merit and Satisfaction of Christ, which is all the Reconciliation that on his part is wrought for us.

But what, is there then a two-fold Reconciliation, one on Christ's part, and another on ours? Yes, and 'tis for want of distinguishing these, or at least due attention to this Distinction that all the Error and Confusion in this Matter has been Occasion'd. There is certainly a two-fold Reconciliation, or, if you will, a twofold Degree of it. The First is previous to our Repentance, and indeed wholly preventive of any thing we can do; the Second follows it, and is grounded upon it. That which is previous to
Repentance

Repentance consists in a bare Remissibility of Sin, that which follows it consists in the full and actual Remission of it. The First of these is wholly Absolute and Inconditionate, (there being nothing required of us to make sin pardonable to us) the Second is suspended upon Conditions, till the performance of which, Sin, though Pardonable, is not however actually pardon'd. In the first of these we are wholly *Passive* and *unconcerned*, it being all over the pure Work of our Redeemer, in the Second we are Active, and must come in for a part. Which makes me call one of these a Reconciliation on Christ's Part, and the other a Reconciliation on ours. Nor is this Distinction without Foundation in Scripture, wherein there is express mention of each part of it. That of *St. Paul to the Romans*, Rom. 5. 8, 9. *God commendeth his Love towards us in that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us, much more then being justified by his Blood we shall be saved from Wrath through him*, is quoted by a Learned Person to this Purpose, who will have the former Clause to refer to the First Degree of Reconciliation, and the latter to the Second. But I think he is utterly Mistaken. For 'tis plain that the Expression of *being justified by his Blood*, being immediately opposed to that state of Enmity we were in, antecedently to the Mediation of Christ, can reach no farther than to the next Degree above it, and consequently can only signify the First and general Reconciliation, that state of Remissibility into which we were all put by the Blood of Christ, which is also upon other Grounds shewn to be the Sense of the Place by the Learned Dr. *Hammond*

mond in his Annotations upon it. But I am not concern'd for the Loss of this Place, since there are two others so full and express to the purpose that there will be no miss of its Service. The First is that remarkable one of St. Paul to the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19, 20. *All things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the Ministry of Reconciliation.* To wit, that *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of Reconciliation.* Now then we are *Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God.* Here is a plain Account of a double Reconciliation, one on God's part, that he was reconciling the World to himself in Christ, and the other on our part, in that we are intreated to be reconciled to God. Which must needs be a Reconciliation distinct from the Former, because 'tis made the Subject of Persuasion and Entreaty, and consequently supposed to be matter of Contingency and uncertainty, neither of which can be applied to our Reconciliation as wrought by Christ. So again St. John speaks of the First Reconciliation, that on Christ's part, when he says, 1 Joh. 2. 2. *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And he is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but for the Sins of the whole World.* The universality of which Character shews it plainly to be meant of the First Reconciliation resulting immediately from the Death and Satisfaction of Christ. The Second he respects when he says in another place, 1 Joh. 1. 7. *that if we walk in the Light as he is in the Light,*

Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son Cleanses us from all Sin. The *Conditionality* of which shew's it as truly to be meant of the *Second Reconciliation*, as the other part by its *Universality* is *Necessarily* referr'd to the *First*. From the Mouth therefore of these two *Witnesses* *St. Paul* and *St. John*, (not to *Summon* in any more) I think here is sufficient *Evidence* to conclude for a *twofold Reconciliation*, one on *Christ's part*, and another on *ours*; and moreover, that that on *Christ's part* does not consist in *Actual Pardon* or *Justification*, but only in laying the *Ground* and *Foundation* of it, in procuring for us not the *Possession* of it, but the *Capacity* and *Possibility*, which is then reduced to *A&t*, and made *Complete*, when we put the *Conditions* upon which it is suspended, when we comply with those terms upon which it was purchased by his *Blood*, and is offer'd to us in his *Gospel*. And in this I think I have given a just and clear *Account* of the *Extent* of *Christ's Satisfaction*, and shewn in what *Sense*, and how far *God* may be said to be *Reconciled* to us, or *Pleased* with us in his *Son*; that *Beloved Son* in whom he declares himself well pleased, or thoroughly pacify'd, to the greatest degree of *Satisfaction* and *Acquiescence*.

FROM the foregoing Considerations concerning the true *Extent* of the *Satisfaction* of *Christ*, the first Improvement that may be made, is, that they furnish us with a certain *Measure* whereby to give a decisive *Sentence* in that great (though needless) *Controversy* about *Justification by Works*. I shall not at present ingage in the *Debate*, having already laid down such *Principles* upon

upon which the true Issue of it will depend. For (in short) if all that Christ as *Satisfying* has done for us be only to instate us in a Capacity of Pardon, then 'tis most certain that we are to do all the rest, all that is further necessary to make this Pardon perfect and complete. If Christ's part reaches no further than a *Capacity*, then the *Actuality* of this Capacity must depend upon our doing the Conditions required, and then to dispute whether Repentance be necessary to Justification when this Justification is supposed not to be the immediate Effect of Christ's Death, but to be suspended upon Repentance as the Condition of it, seems to me such an idle, not to say *blundering* Controversy, that one would think the World were hard put to't for something to keep them awake, when this should be made a Question.

AGAIN, We may also upon these Measures return a Clear and Exact Answer to that Great *Socinian* Objection, that Christ could not die to reconcile us to God because God was reconciled to us before, as being supposed already so to love the World as to send his only Son to be our Saviour. For the Reconciliation wrought by Christ, being, as we have stated it, supposed to consist in a Remissibility of Sin upon Repentance, 'tis plain that God was not so reconciled to us before. For as this is a Degree of Reconciliation less than that actual Pardon which is obtain'd by Repentance, so 'tis more than that general Kindness and good Will which God had for us as Creatures, and which moved him to send his Son to die for us. To form a clear Idea of this Matter, we need only distinguish of a Threefold Degree in the Love of God. One Degree whereby he lo-

ved us as Creatures, concerning which St. John, *God so loved the World, &c.* Another Degree whereby he stood yet more kindly affected towards us as instated in a Capacity of Pardon by the Satisfaction of his Son. And a Third as actually pardon'd, and fully reconciled to him by being qualify'd according to the Conditions required to that purpose. Now as the Third of these is greater than the Second, so the Second (which we suppose to be the Effect of Christ's Death) is as much greater than the First. And since this Second Degree does not commence till after the Satisfaction of Christ, as the Third does not till after the Conditions are perform'd, it is plain that this Second Degree of Love, which is the Effect of the Death of Christ, is not the same with that which was the Impulsive Cause of it, and consequently that the Death of Christ was not (as the *Socinian* pretends) unnecessary to procure it.

THE last Improvement I shall make of this Discourse, is, that since Christ has so far undertaken for us, as to make way for second Thoughts, by procuring for us a Capacity of Pardon upon Terms worthy of his Wisdom, Justice and Holiness, since he has retriev'd our once desperate Fortune, set up again our Broken and *Bankrupt* Nature, put Heaven once more in our Reach, removed the Guardian Sword from the Gate of Paradise, and brought us so nigh to the Kingdom of God, that there wants nothing but our contributing our part, that we may enter and take Possession of it. I say, that since our Saviour Christ has done all this for us, we would learn to admire the Grace and Goodness of God towards

us,

us, thankfully receive so inestimable a Benefit, and also faithfully endeavour to fulfil the Conditions requir'd on our part, in order to the Completion of our Happiness. That so from a Capacity of Pardon we may pass on to the *Actual Possession* of it, that our Peace and Reconciliation with God may be on both sides Perfect and Intire, that he may delight and be satisfy'd *in us*, as well as *for us*, and may say of every one of us as he did of him that undertook for us, *This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* Amen.

and the word said unto him, I will give you a

A

DISCOURSE CONCERNING Practical Atheism.

T I T. I. 16.

They profess that they know God, but in Works they deny him.



THE true Character of a *Practical Atheist*, who does not, as the Notional one, expressly deny the Being of God and ridicule the Belief of him, who does not Charge them with Weakness that plead for his Existence, and them yet with greater that serve him, and live under an awful Sense of him, expose the Mysteries of Faith as Impossibilities, and the Rule of it as a mere Human Invention, deride the Notion of an after State as the Dreams of the Night, and represent Heaven and Hell as imaginary Scenes, and so with one Breath blow away all Religion as the Trick and Device of the Crafty, and the vain Amusement of Easy and Credulous Spirits. No, he professes to believe that there is a God, and seems

seems concern'd that others should believe it too, and accordingly you shall often hear him discourse of the Reasonableness of such a Belief, and if he has Learning to his Zeal, you shall have him it may be write Books for the proof of a Deity, and to shew the unreasonableness of Atheism, all along lamenting and complaining that there should be any occasion for it, and sometimes in the height and fulness of his Zeal, (so strongly is the Man persuaded himself) questioning whether there be any such thing as a real Atheist in the World. Nay, he professes not only to believe a God, but to *know* him; to be so well acquainted with his Nature and with his Will, with his Works and with his Ways, nay, and with his very Decrees, as if he had obtain'd not only *Moses's* Sight, but his *Wifb*, and had seen not the Back-parts only, but the Face of God. Nor is he content to sit down with bare Deism, but with a God acknowledges both Providence and a revealed Religion, and particularly the Christian, as the only one that can justly pretend to the Faith of a Reasonable Creature, and that is at once worthy of both God and Man. Nor is he only a Christian at large, and to himself, but communicates with his Fellow-Christians, and because he cannot do so with all of them, joins himself to a particular Society of Christians, such as is supposed to be a pure and sound part of the Catholic Church; with them he communicates in all the Externals of Religion, and is very Zealous and conformable in his way, very Sound and Orthodox in all Points, conceiving as rightly both of the *Mysteries* and of the *Morals* of the Gospel as any Man in the World, and as ready to main-

tain the Truths of it, as far as Words or Writing will go, against any that shall either deny or misrepresent them. I say as far as Words or Writing will go, for you are very much mistaken in the Man if you expect he should be a Martyr for the God or the Religion he professes; so far is he from *Dying for it*, that he does not so much as *Live according to it*. With all his Faith and Knowledge and his high Pretensions to both, you will find him as loose and disorderly in his Manners as if he believ'd nothing of what he professes, or as any of those who are declared Infidels. He has an Angel's Form and Voice, but a Devil's Foot, breaks the Commandments with a sound Creed, and marches on in the way to Hell, with Directions to Heaven in his Hand. For indeed his Divinity lies only in his Head, and tho' his Tongue number him among the Faithful, his Life is all over *Infidel*. And here he strikes hands with the Atheist again, walks with him in the same Road, though Disputing against him as he goes. He disavows his Principle, but conspires with him in his Intention, and most effectually does his Work, and will no doubt share with him in his Wages. Such Men there were even in the First and Best Days of the Church, and I am afraid a great many more such Now to whom this Character of the Apostle's is the best that belongs, *They profess that they know God, but in Works they deny him.*

WHETHER the Apostle intends this of the Jewish false Teachers, who though they profess'd to know and believe the One Living and True God, yet lived like Atheists, in as perfect a Contradiction to his Will as if there were

no God, or as any of the Gentiles who were
Ἄθεος καὶ τὸν κόσμον without God in the World, in Allusion to what is said, *Rom. 2. 17. Behold thou art called a Jew, and restest in the Law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his Will, &c.* Or whether he had the *Gnostics* in his View, who pretended to great Knowledge of God and Divine Matters, but liv'd Prophane and Impious Lives, and with all their Sublime and Lofty Theories were no better than Atheists in their Practice, I shall not think it a Question of that Moment as to spend any time in the Resolution of it, but taking the Words as a general Proposition applicable to all Ages and Places of the World, as in which a Good Faith or Profession, and an Ill Life Meet together (the two strange Ingredients that go to the Composition of Practical Atheism) shall oblige my self to the Consideration of the following Particulars.

FIRST, That the profess'd Belief of a Deity is Consistent with an ill Life, or, that those who Profess to believe the Being of a God, may and do often lead ill Lives.

SECONDLY, That an ill Life is a real Denial of God, or, that those who lead wicked Lives do really Deny that God whom they otherwise Profess.

THIRDLY, I shall mark out some particular Vices and vicious Practices which are in a more eminent Manner Denials of God.

CONCERNING the First of these, that the profess'd Belief of a Deity is consistent with an ill Life, I need not say much, because 'tis what we

H h h 4 all

all know by visible Experience, and that so well, that there is more need to lament a Truth that reflects so much upon the Reason of Mankind, and is such a standing Shame and Reproach to our Natures, than to have it further laid open. But not to let this part go without a little Reflection, we may consider that tho' the External Profession of a God (whether he be believ'd or no) be a considerable restraint upon Mankind, and an Instrument of Publick Order in the World, yet this does not necessarily carry along with it an inward Sense of Religion, nor a true Regularity of Life and Conversation. It will indeed keep up the *Form of Religion* (for otherwise how shall even the Profession of it stand) but it may be still a dead, empty Form, without any thing of the Power and Life of Godliness, and Men may lead very ill Lives, while they make Profession of all those great things that *should*, and (if soundly believ'd) *would* certainly ingage them in the contrary Practice. For 'tis in the first place very possible that he who outwardly professes the Belief of a God, may in his Heart believe no such thing. He may with great Formality stand up at the Creed, and bow at the Name of *Jesus* too, and yet be one of those Fools that say in their Hearts *there is no God*, and then what will his Profession of the contrary signify towards the due Government of his Life! It may indeed put him upon a few Formalities and External Decencies, so far as is necessary to act the Part and keep up the Character of a *Professor*, but it can carry him no further; and if the Man does go further, it is not by the force of this, but of some other Principle. But suppose he that professes does also *Believe a God*, yet he may

may form such wrong Conceptions of him as may be so far from deriving any good Influence upon his Actions, that they may serve to corrupt and disorder them. He may think with the *Epicurean*, that God is an idle, unactive Being, that so centers in himself as to mind nothing but his own Repose, and the recollected Injoyment of his own Fulness, or if he allow him to have regard for any thing out of himself, yet he may fancy him to be either so soft and easy, so fond and indulgent, so all made up of Goodness and Sweetness, as that he will not resent or punish the greatest Contempts of his Authority and Violations of his Law; or on the other side so peevish and difficult, so over-rigid and severe that he will bear with nothing, forgive nothing, accept nothing, make no allowances, but take advantage of the least Slips and Failures, and punish Men eternally for them, tho' they are never so sincere in their Intentions, and never so hearty in their Endeavours to please him. Or if he does not think either of these Characters to belong to the general Nature of God, yet he may ascribe both at once to him in relation to particular Persons, imagining him so fond and partially kind to some few happy Favourites as to decree them absolutely to Salvation from all Eternity, and accordingly in time to see no Hurt or Evil in them, but to be blind to all their Faults and Irregularities, when at the same time he is supposed to be so unaccountably prejudic'd against all the rest as to destine them to Ruin and Destruction by a Decree equally absolute and irreversible. These and many other such wrong Conceptions of God may he that professes the Belief of him entertain, which

which may render that Belief altogether as ineffectual towards the well-ordering of his Life, as if he were without God in the World. But suppose him not only to believe a God, but to think rightly of him too, yet after all he may yield so little actual *Attention* to this his habitual Belief and Knowledge, he may so seldom think upon God, and so little consider what he Believes and thinks of him, as still to lead an ill Life, and detain this great and fundamental Truth in Unrighteousness. St. *Paul* tells us, *Rom. 1. 18.* that the *Heathen* did so: They stifled and imprison'd the Divine Light (tho' common Notices and Principles they had of God) in their Minds, and suffer'd it not to break forth and display it self so as to influence their Lives and Actions. And hence it came to pass, *ver. 22.* that tho' *they knew God*, yet *they glorified him not as God*, did not pay him that Homage that was due to him, nor serve him in such a manner as was worthy of him. And the like we may easily presume, and by sad Experience find too true in *Christians*, who tho' they have a more shining Light to walk by than the Heathen had, know more of God and of their Duty towards him, yet may give as little Attention to their greater as the other did to their lesser Light, and so for want of having their Eyes open, may stumble as much, and wander as often by *Day*, as the other did by *Night*. The thing that I plainly intend is this; 'Tis a very possible, and indeed a very ordinary thing for Men not to consider and not to attend to the Consequences of what they Believe and Know (there are so many Passions within, and so many sensible Impressions without to divert them from it) and when they

they do so 'tis all one for that time as if they did neither Believe nor Know, and they stand upon the same level with *Infidels* and *Ignorant Persons*, and will not act one jot wiser or better than they do, the want of Consideration alone being enough to frustrate all the Effects of their Faith and Knowledge in order to a good Life. For let a Man Believe never so much, or Know never so much of the Existence, Nature and Will of God, yet he has the *Use* and *Benefit* of that Faith and Knowledge no longer and no further than he actually attends to and exerts them ; as let a Traveller's Eye-sight be never so good, it serves him however for Direction no longer than he keeps his Eyes open and intent upon his Way, and if he shut them, 'tis not his general Habit or Power of Seeing that will keep him from Mistakes and Wandrings. If the Light be not present to him for ready use when he is to walk by it, 'tis all one as if it were at the other side of the Hemisphere, he could but be in the Dark then, and so he is now. For he has it not to order his Motions by it, though he has it ; and so the *Traveller* is Blind, though the *Man* sees. The Application of this to Morality is very easy, and therefore since he that professes the Belief of a God may not consider what is contain'd in that Belief, nor maintain in his Mind a present actual Sense of it, how fundamental a Principle soever that may be, and in it self productive of good Living, yet for want of this actual Sense of what he habitually and in the general believes it may prove a meer nothing to him, and he may live and act as disorderly as if he acknowledged no such Principle.

And

And when he does so, we may argue as well backwards from his ill Practice, to the want of his Actual Belief, as we did before from the want of his Actual Belief to his ill Practice. Which opens us an Entrance upon the Second thing proposed.

SECONDLY, *That an ill Life is a real Denial of God, or, That those who lead Wicked Lives do really Deny That God whom they otherwise profess.* For so the Apostle expressly, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him.* These Works to be sure are ill Works, being set in opposition to the Profession of God, which accordingly has laid us a ground for the First Proposition, *That the profess'd Belief of a Deity is consistent with an ill Life.* We have now in the next place the true Natural Value and import of these Works, what they signify, and by Necessary Construction amount to, which it seems is no less than a denial of God. *In Works they deny him.*

By which I do not mean (nor do I suppose does the Apostle) that he that lives an ill Life must Necessarily in his general and habitual Judgment hold that there is no God. For that were to confound the *Practical* with the *Speculative* Atheist, which need not be, since, as has been shewn already, not only the Profession, but even the Belief of a God may upon other Accounts be consistent with a course of ill living. Nor do I mean that there is any necessity that our Ill Liver should by way of Positive Judgment, so much as *actually* pronounce within himself that there is no God. 'Tis enough if he do not actually believe and consider that there is one, that alone being sufficient to frustrate and put by all the Influence and Efficacy of his general Belief, and to lay him open to the Assaults of the Tempter.

Tempter. When therefore, I say, That an Ill Life is a Denial of God, my Meaning precisely is, that all Ill Livers do by their Actions plainly declare that either they do not thoroughly believe that there is a God, but are Atheists in their Hearts, whatever they may pretend or profess to the World, or at least that they have not a present Sense of their Belief, and do not Actually Consider that there is a God. They either are not really convinc'd and persuaded of that Fundamental Truth, or else they do not duly attend to it: they are either under the *Habit*, or under the *Act* of Infidelity, which as it may very properly be call'd during the time that it lasts, a *Denial* of God, so 'tis that which the ill Life of any Man will justly warrant us to conclude of him.

'T is most certain in the General, that all Defect in *Practice* proceeds from, and therefore argues some Defect in *Theory*. For it being necessary that a Man should Will as at that Instant he Thinks, however it may be against his Habitual Judgment; (since otherwise he would Will what then appears to him not to be Eligible, which would be to Will Evil as Evil) if he Wills amiss 'tis plain that he must also Think amiss, and that there is an Error in his Understanding as well as in his Will. *If any man walk in the day*, says our Saviour, *he stumbleth not*, because *he seeth the light of this World*. *But if a man walk in the night*, *he stumbleth*, because *there is no light in him*. *John 3.19*. This is true in a Spiritual and Mystical Sense as well as in the Natural. A well-inform'd Understanding keeps all the Motions of the Will true and regular, but Ignorance and Mistake will be sure to pervert them. And as the Night makes a Man stum-
ble,

ble, so from his Stumbling we may conclude that he walks in the Night. Whoever Sins is ignorant of something or other which he should know, and if not wholly destitute of Light, has at least some Darkness in him. Either he is not sufficiently instructed in his Duty, so as to know in general that such an Action is a Sin, or else he does not think it at the very Instant to be so, or he does not (perhaps Habitually, however to be sure *Actually*) think Sin to be the greatest Evil; but that 'tis better to commit it than to be without such a *Pleasure* or such an *Interest*, the want of which in the Hurry of his Passion he imagines to be the greater Evil of the two. Or it may be he does not sufficiently consider the Consequences of Sin, nor the great Motives and Engagements to Obedience, which are so weighty and momentous in themselves, that they need only be consider'd to make them effectual. Or he flatters himself with Hopes of Impunity upon the account either of God's Mercy, or Human Frailty, or the violence of the Temptation, or of the Number of those who offend with him. Or possibly he boldly ventures upon Sin with a deluding prospect of Repenting for it afterwards, and that it may be after he has for a long time indulged himself in the Practice of it, not considering the Certainty of Death, nor the Uncertainty of Life, nor the invisible Periods of the Divine Grace, nor the Stings of an awaken'd Conscience, nor the Terrors of the last Judgment, nor the two great Eternities. Some Practical Truth or other he is ignorant of, or, which comes to the same, has not in his View. For if a Man could Sin with all these Considerations quick and fresh about him, what

what is there left that should ever make him Repent? For 'tis the Recovery of these Thoughts that must put him upon it. But if these very Thoughts can consist with a course of Sinning, the Man must e'ne go on in it for ever, there being then no handle left in him for Repentance to take hold of. We must therefore conclude that our Sinner walk'd in the Dark when he Stumbled and Miss'd his Way, that either he had no Light with him, or that it fail'd him by some sudden Eclipse; that either he had not so much as an Habitual Knowledge of the most Concerning and Important Truths of Morality, or at least that the Eye of his Mind was turn'd off from the Actual View of them. That is in short, that either he did not *Understand*, or that he did not *Consider*.

AND as this is true in the General, that want of Light is the Cause of Mens Stumbling, and that all Disorder in Will and Practice argues some Defect and Mistake in Judgment, according to what the Scripture says of the First Sinner, 1 Tim.

2. 14. *The Woman being deceived was in the Transgression*, so does it particularly argue some Defect or other, either Habitual or Actual, in the Belief of that Great Fundamental Principle, the Existence of a God, which either is not cordially and thoroughly receiv'd, or at least not duly consider'd and attended to by those who presume to offend and disobey him. Infidelity of some sort or some Degree or other is at the Bottom of all Sin, and lurks secretly in the Hearts of all Sinners. They either do not with a full Conviction and Persuasion believe that there is a God, but have some hidden Reserves of Suspicion and Mistrust, some Sceptical Doubts and Irresolutions about

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bout it, even when they seem to be most Confident of it, and Zealous for it; or else they do not keep up in their Minds a lively Sense and Recollection of that Thought, nor with due Application consider that there is really such an awful Being in the World. Or they do not sufficiently attend to the Consequences of this Faith; or they do not mind what it includes, nor distinctly consider what it is that they believe in believing a God, nor take asunder and examine the several Articles of this their grand Creed, but swallow it down whole and in gross, without either Chewing or Digesting it, and then no wonder if like a Medicine wrapt up in an indissoluble *Vehicle* it goes through them without any Operation. In short, either they have not truly and sincerely in them this general Faith, that God is, or it lies dormant in them, and they do not live under an awaken'd Sense of it. Either God is not in all their Thoughts, or at least not in those with which they act, and by which their Actions are govern'd.

AND all this they do as good as declare by their wicked Practices, let their other Declarations and Pretences be what they will. For did Men heartily and thoroughly Believe the Existence of a God, I say thoroughly, with as firm and unshaken a Persuasion as they believe there is a Sun that shines upon them, or a King that rules over them, and did they actually and seriously weigh and consider with themselves what they believ'd, did this Truth lie open and bare to their Minds, were their Eyes intent upon it, were it present to them, as present as the Thought of their own Being is when they see themselves in a Glass, or as the Thoughts of

Death

Death are to a Malefactor when he sees and feels the Rope about his Neck, is it possible that they should be so Wicked as they are, and lead such Immoral and Irreligious Lives as they do ? No certainly, this is such a Mighty Idea, such a vast and pregnant Thought as would fill and wholly ingage their Minds, bear down their Wills, be an effectual Restraint upon all their Motions, and such as would not fail to keep them within the Bounds of their Duty. Not that I think it such an Infallible Security to any Man's Practice barely to whisper to his Soul, *There is a God,* (for 'tis not to be imagin'd that this Sacred Name should be as a *Charm or Spell*, that the very Mention of it should drive away the Devil and his Temptations) but that when this Great Thought comes to be open'd and unbowell'd, to be unravell'd and laid bare, there are such Momentous Truths inclos'd in it as must needs strike such an awful Impression into the Spilit of the Serious Considerer, as to preserve him from transgressing his Duty. For to think there is a God is in more Words to think that there is a Being Infinitely Great and Infinitely Good, of the most perfect Justice, Wisdom and Power, able to bestow the greatest Happiness upon those that Serve and O-bey him, and to inflict the utmost Misery upon Disobedient and Rebellious Spirits ; that is present in every place and to every thing, that sees every Motion and every Thought that passes in the World, and will hereafter Judge it in Righteousness, that hates Sin Infinitely, and will punish it if not Repented of, everlastingily. And can a Man Sin with this great and filling Thought before him, and Staring him as it were in the

very Face? If he can, I know not what Thoughts those must be that shall ever bring him to Repent of it. But if he cannot (and it appears by that very Argument, as well as from the Power and Efficacy of the Thought it self that he cannot) we may then justly conclude, that if he does presume to transgres his Duty, 'tis because he has not a present and actual View of this Thought, and does not duely Consider that there is a God, who is now his *Witness*, and will hereafter be his *Judge*. Whereby it plainly appears that Infidelity and Atheism lie at the Root of all Sin, and that God is really denied in some degree or other by every Worker of Iniquity, let him profess and declare to the Contrary as much as he please. Which justifies a certain *English* Phrase in a more than ordinary Emphasis, wherein we use to call a **Man of a Wicked Life**, an *Ungodly Man*. And he deserves the Name, though we should put it into *Greek*, being as I have shewn in strict Reality and Propriety, a *Denier of God*.

AND let me tell him that this is the most *Effeſtual* way of Denying him, since Mens true inward Sentiments are to be concluded more from what they do, than from what they say. A Man may deny the Being of God in Words, only for Argument and Discourse Sake, or out of Levity and Vanity of Humour, to appear a Wit and a **Man of Paradoxes**; or out of Bravery, to be thought one of a bold daring Spirit, or it may be for Experiment, to try what others will say; or the better to recommend himself to some sort of Company by such an outward Compliance, though at the same time he has Nothing of this in the Bottom of his Judgment. But when a

Man

Man shall deny him by the whole Tenor of his Life and Manners, 'tis plain that he really Thinks what the other Speaks, and there is more Reason why he should be believ'd upon his *Life*, than that the other should upon his *Word*. Nay more than that he himself should be believ'd upon his own word to the Contrary. For the bare Profession of a God is no Convincing Argument that a Man believes a God (though it may be an Argument of *Charity* when nothing appears to Contradict it) since Interest and Decency may give us a sufficient account of that Matter. But on the other side, a Wicked Life is a plain Demonstration that a Man *disbelieves* him, at least during his Continuance in it, an ill Liver being, as I have shewn, no better than an *Atheist for the time being*. Which in short is the true difference between a Practical and a Speculative Atheist, the Speculative Atheist being in Habit what the Practical one is in Act, and the Practical Atheist being in Act what the Speculative one is in Habit.

AND as a Loose and Profane Life is the most Effectual, so 'tis also the most *Mischievous* way of denying a Deity. For besides that few will be so uncivil and unmannerly as to say in express Terms (whatever they think) that there is no God, whenever any one is so hardy as to talk at that rate, 'tis such an intrenchment upon Publick Decency, such a Violation to Common Modesty, such an Affront to the Natural Sense of Mankind, that every one is presently alarm'd at it, and upon his Guard against it, and few will believe that the Man speaks in Earnest, and so the Poison for want of due Infusion does but little hurt. But

How Wicked Practices insinuate themselves by Degrees, and as it were insensibly and unawares; and with themselves that Principle of Infidelity from which they proceed, and of which they carry a very Strong and Contagious Tincture. Whereby it comes to pass that the Practical, though perhaps not always a worse Man, may yet do more real *Mischief* than the Speculative Atheist.

HOWEVER, whether he does or no, he is to be sure more *Absurd* and *Inconsistent* with himself, and more *Self-Condemn'd*. They are indeed both of them Deniers of God, but with this difference, that if the Speculative Atheist denies him in Practice, he denies him in Principle too, and so is a down-right plain-dealing Sinner; consistent with himself, and throughout of a piece: But now the Practical Atheist, though he lives altogether as the other does, yet he Professes and Pretends to better Things, and so adds *Hypocrisy* to his other Immoralities. As his ill Life is a sensible and breathing Scandal to his Profession, so his Profession is a constant upbraiding Objection and Aggravation to his Ill Living, exposing him to the just Censure and Derision, not only of Good Men, but even of his very *Brother Atheist*, who may thus bespeak him, and insult over him. *What an Absurd Self-Inconsistent Creature art thou! I indeed live a Careless and Dissolute Life, but 'tis because I hold no Principle that obliges me to live better: But thou (Fool as thou art) Professest to Believe a God, and yet liv'st as bad as I that hold there is None. As I am, and as I think at present, I have no reason to Change my Course, my Conduct being very Wise if my Supposition be true, but did I really believe what thou pretendest*

pretendest to do, that there is a God, I should think it concern'd me to lead another sort of Life than thou dost, and not to be such a Self-Condemn'd Fool as thou art. I would go on to deride thy Weakness, but that I rather believe thou art at Bottom as very an Infidel as my self, and that all thy Professions to the Contrary, are but mere Shew and Pageantry, something to blind the World, and to Compass some Politick Ends. Now what can a Wicked Man Reply to this? Unless it be to own the latter part of the Charge, *Heb. 3. 12.* by Confessing that there is indeed a Heart of Unbelief in him departing from the Living God, and so to acquit himself from the Imputation of Absurdity and Self-Inconsistency by owning that of Atheism and Infidelity; which indeed is in great Measure the Truth of the Case, since, as I have shewn, an ill Life is a real Denial of God, and those who lead Wicked Lives do in Effect deny that God whom they otherwise Profess.

AND why then do they Profess him? Nay, why do they so much as take his Venerable Name into their Polluted Lips, since they hate to be reform'd, and cast his words behind them? Why do they suffer their Lives thus to give the lie to their Profession, and their Profession thus daily to Reproach and Condemn their Lives? Why do they not either renounce their *Faith* or take more Care of their *Works*? What, to Believe like Christians, and Live like Heathens? Why do they not either throw up their Principle, or reform their Practice? Why are they such a standing, visible, living Contradiction to themselves? O the unaccountable Folly and Madness of a Wicked Life when 'tis join'd with a good Faith! The strange Absurdity of such a Sinner, the *Mystery of his Iniquity*!

quity! And yet how many are there that are guilty of it? No fewer than all Ill-Living Christians, though some more notoriously so than others. Which leads me to the Third thing I proposed, *viz.* To Mark out some Particular Vices and Vicious Practices, which are in a more Eminent Manner Denials of God. And among these I reckon,

1. *The placing ones End in any Creature*, whether that Creature be ones self or any other Being. He that makes himself his End, that Centers and Terminates in himself, that refers all things to himself, and measures all things by the Relation which they have to his own private Personal Interest, is a Denier of God to some purpose, and holds one of the First Ranks of Practical Atheists. There is indeed only the down-right Idolater before him, though it be a little disputable to which belongs the Right of Precedency, since the Self-Ending, Self-Centring Man does in a very true and proper Sense Idolize himself, by assuming to himself a Prerogative which the Infinite God only has, or is Capable of having. He as God sits in the Temple of God, and is a kind of *Antichrist* in *Morality*. And so again the Man that places his End in any of the Creatures without him in Sensible and Temporal Objects, in the Honour, Pleasures or Riches of this World, is a very gross Denier of God, as Deifying and Idolizing those little empty things upon which he thus rests and reposes himself. Upon which Account it is that the Scripture says expressly of one of these Lovers of Creatures, the *Covetous* Man, that he is an *Idolater*. And the same is altogether as true of the other two, the *Ambitious* and *Voracious*

luptuous. These have their Idols too as well as the Covetous Wretch, though not of Silver and Gold. Their Idolatry is only a little more Refined and Spiritualized. For whoever desires any thing as his true Good, Deifies that thing, and if that thing be not God, is truly guilty of Idolatry. For God only is the true Good, End and Centre of all Rational Natures, having given them Appetites too large to be satisfy'd with any thing less than Himself. As for other things, they are so far from contenting our Passion that they do but Inflame it ; and instead of filling our Heart, do but make the Emptiness of it wider by their having a Room in it. They are all over false and lying Goods, and accordingly, promised as Rewards by the great Author of Falshood and Deceit. *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* Mat. 4. 9. A Promise wherein (to use an Excellent Re-

mark of the Port Royal upon that Text) the Devil discover'd himself. *Abrege de la Mer- rale de L'Evan-*

gile. Pag. 25.

Since God has never promised these false Goods to his Servants, but only to Figure and Shadow forth those Goods which are True and Eternal. Now he himself is that only True and Eternal Good, for whom we were made, and in whom only we can be Happy, and therefore he that places his End and sets up his Rest in any Creature, makes that to be God, and so plainly denies him who truly is so.

2. *The desiring that any Creature should place its End in us.* This will easily be acknowledged to be another very gross way of Denying God if it were Practicable, only perhaps it may seem too

gross for any to be guilty of it. And indeed there have not been over many (though there want not Instances of this Nature) who have let themselves run up to that Extravagant pitch of Vanity and Impiety as to assume to themselves the Title of Gods, and to have Altars Erected, and Incense offer'd to their Honour and Grandeur. He must be a Monster of a Man that can be so Sacrilegiously Vain as this comes to. But 'tis not so very strange to see Men desire that their *Understandings* should be the Measure of all other Mens, nay, even of Truth it self, not allowing any thing to be true but whose Reason and Manner they can conceive and adjust to their own Minds, though reveal'd even by him who can neither Err nor Deceive. Nor to see them desire that their *Wills* should be the Rule and Standard of other Mens Wills, and accordingly to expect Compliance in all their Humours and Fancies, that others should Love what they Love, and Hate what they Hate. Nor to see them willing to ingage Men's Thoughts and Affections upon them, to have Possession of their Heads and Hearts, and to have them full of *them* and of their little Concernments. Nor is it so very strange to see them covet to have Men's Praise and Admiration, their Applauses and Acclamations, and to endeavour to turn their Eyes from the Contemplation of God's Excellencies (to whom only Glory and Honour belongs) to the View and Consideration of their own. These things are no such Rarities, being done and practised every Day. Nor is it any such great Wonder that those who can think themselves worthy of their own Best and Sovereign Affection, should desire

to

to have the same place in the Hearts of other Men. But now this is but another way of Seating ones Self as God in the Great Temple of God, the *World*, and receiving the Worship and Veneration of our Fellow-Creatures, though they do not set up to us Shrines and Altars, nor fall down before us with Incense and Sacrifice. To desire thus to turn the Eye of the Creatures upon our Selves, and to have them stand fix't and intent upon us, all ingaged and employ'd in the Contemplation of our Excellencies, what is it but in a manner to assume the place of God in respect of them, First to Deity our Selves, and then to Wish that others should behave themselves towards us accordingly, which cannot but be a very Gross, if only because a *double Denial* of God.

3. *Hypocrisy.* This is a Vice that carries upon it very deep Prints of Atheism, is Season'd with a Strong Tincture of Irreligion, and whose very Ground and Fundamental *Supposition* is Infidelity. There were no such Practical Atheists as the Scribes and Pharisees, the Leven of their Hypocrisy was a Leven of Unbelief, and they voided the *Being* of God as much by their *Lives*, as his *Commandments* by their *Traditions*. Indeed every Hypocrite is one of those Fools that say in their Hearts that there is no God, or at least that he is not Omniscent enough to be a Searcher of Hearts, and to Know what is Conceiv'd and Entertain'd there. For did he thoroughly believe and seriously consider this, he would never Content himself with the Form of Godliness, demure Looks, long and loud Prayers, and broad Phylacteries;

lacteries; but would Endeavour to enter into the true Spirit and Power of it, and would take care to approve his inward Man to the Eye of God, as well as his outward to the Eyes of the World. This, I say, he would do if he had a due Sense of an All-seeing God; but since he does otherwise, making his Court only to the World, and taking heed only to that part of him which lies open to Human Inspection, 'tis plain that he is aware of no other Witness, that he has in him an Heart of Unbelief (tho' he be commonly a Man all made up of *Faith*) that he secretly Denies God, notwithstanding all his Pretences to *Godliness*, and tho' no *Profest Atheist*, is yet an *Atheistical Professor*.

SOME other Vices I might set down as Chargeable with a more than ordinary Denial of God, such as Blasphemy, Profane and Irreligious Talking, idle Swearing, Perjury, Witchcraft, &c. but after all there is no such Denial of God as *Final Impenitence*, nor such a Practical Atheist as the Constant Persevering Sinner, that lives on and dies in his Wicked Courses. Other Sinners, let their Crimes be what they will, have however their lucid Intervals, sometimes in the Dark, and sometimes in the Light, like the successive returns of Night and Day. But the Final Impenitent has a thick Cloud always dwelling upon his Soul, is all over one solid impenetrable Mass of unmixed Darkness, like the Chaos before the Birth of Light, a Star so swallow'd up and all grown over with a Conflux of dark spots as never to be able to break through its Obscure Crust, and recover its Native Brightness; no longer indeed a Star but a Planet, one of St. Jude's *Wandering*

dring Stars, to whom is reserv'd the Blackness of Darkness for ever. In one word, he is such a Practical as very little differs from a Speculative Atheist.

Now the use that I shall make of this whole Discourse is briefly this, that since (as you have heard) a Wicked Life is a real Denial of God, we would take the greater Care what Manner of Persons we are, and what Manner of Lives we lead, *that we would no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the Vanity of their Mind, having their Understanding darken'd, but denying all ungodliness and worldly Lusts, live godly, righteously and soberly in this present World*; Eph. 4. 17, 18. and order our Conversation so as becomes the Gospel of Christ, lest we be found in the Number of those who deny God in Deed while they profess him in Word, and be reckon'd by him among the Worst of Infidels while we place our selves in the First Form of Christians. Especially Considering that the Atheistical part (which I fear is a great part) of the World being willing to have as much Company as they can (as all Men are that walk in the Dark) and Measuring us by our Actions more than by our Verbal Declarations, will be ready to Conclude that whatever we pretend, we are inwardly of the same Mind with them, because our Lives and Manners are so much alike. And 'twill be in vain to tell them of our Professions, or to go to stop their Mouths with *Creeds* and *Articles*, they will still insist upon what we do, and appeal from our *Faith* to our *Works*, as that which most truly speaks the Man, and reports the Temper and Complexion of his Mind. Let us

us declare and profess what we will, Men will judge of us after all by our *Works*, and so will God too, and so will he whom he has appointed to be the Judge of Quick and Dead, Christ Jesus, who in the last Day will return this killing Answer to all Formal Hypocritical Professors that shall then begin boldly to take Acquaintance with him upon the Account of some outward Privileges, *Luke 13. 27.* *I tell you, I know you not whence ye are, depart from me all ye workers of Iniquity.*

Now to God the Father, &c.

A

DISCOURSE O F Walking by Faith.

In Two Parts.

2 COR. V. 7.

We Walk by Faith, not by Sight.



HERE are two ways of understanding these words. For either *Faith* and *Sight* here relate to different Objects, and then the Apostle does as good as say, *We Live and Order our Conversation, not by what we see in this World, but by what we believe and expect in the next.* Or they relate to one and the same Object, and then his Meaning is, that we live at present by a firm Belief and Expectation only of our *Future State*, and not by any present View, or clear Vision of that State. Either of these Senes will sufficiently Comport with the Apostle's words, and equally serve his Purpose and Design, which is to Express his Willingness to quit this State of Mortality.

Mortality upon Earth, upon the Confidence of Exchanging it for a better in Heaven. Therefore, says he in the Verse before the Text, we are always Confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord: And in the Verse after, We are Confident I say, willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord. Then comes in by way of Parenthesis between both, as the Ground of this his Willingness and Assurance, For we walk by Faith, not by Sight. As much as to say, we are not afraid of what the World so generally is, to depart out of this Life, but willing rather, because we live by other Measures than the World generally does, not ordering our Lives by what we see here, but by what we believe and expect Hereafter: Or, because we know that Death will translate us to an open Vision and real Fruition of that whereof we have here only the Faith and the Expectation, this being a state of Faith only, not of Sight. 'Tis indifferent to the Occasion which of these Senses we take, since either of them will serve the turn, which is to shew the Reason why the Apostle was, and why all good Men should be willing to depart this Life. But though they agree in the same use and Application, they being both a sufficient Reason why a good Man should be willing to leave this World, they are however very different in themselves, and will lay us a Foundation for two distinct Subjects of Discourse; the First Sense expressing the Duty, and the Second the State and Condition of Men in this present World.

I begin with that which Expresses
the Duty of Man, which lays out to our Part I.
Consideration this Practical Proposition,

*That 'tis the Duty of every Christian to Govern and
Order his Life and Conversation, not by what
he sees in this World, but by what he Be-
lieves and Expects in the next. Which is the
first Sense of Walking by Faith, and not by
Sight.*

IF we were to Collect the Duty of Men from their Practice, the direct Contrary of this would be their Measure. For nothing is more Certain than that the General way of the World is quite opposite to this Apostolical Maxim, indeed the very *Reverse* of it. Instead of walking by Faith, not by Sight, their way is to walk by Sight, and not by Faith. Sensible Objects are with them the only Realities, and 'tis by the Impressions of these that they govern not only their Lives and Actions, but even their very *Opinions* and *Senti-
ments*, most of which are built upon the Fallaci-
ous Reports of Sense, upon what they see, and upon what they feel, and are indeed no better than so many *Sensible Prejudices*, which they take up in their Infancy, and stick to all their Lives long. This draws after it a long Train of Mis-
chiefs both in regard to the Intellectual and Moral part of Man, most of our Errors in Speculation, as well as Vices in Practice deriving themselves from this Fountain, and being as so many Grafts Shooting out from this Stock, only the Hurt that it does in Morality is so much the greater,

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as an Error in *Practice* is of worse Consequence than an Error in *Theory*. But be the Consequence of it what it will, the World still goes on in its old beaten Track, and obstinately adheres to its Antient (and therefore with it the most Venerable) Measure, *Sensible Appearance*. And though some few Noble and Generous Spirits by the help of free Meditation, and recollected Reflection, have at length, with no ordinary difficulty rescued their Understandings from this long-settled, and by Use almost warranted Usurpation, no longer forming their Judgments of things upon the Confuse Representations of *Sense*, but upon the clear and distinct Ideas of *Pure Reason*, yet where shall we find the Man that wholly renounces Sense as the Measure of his *Life*! No, such is the Infirmity of Human Nature, that all Men more or less live by Sense, though some few *Think* and *Reason* above it. Not only Vulgar and Popular Souls that make up the Herd and Rabble of Mankind, but even those of more refined Thought and Reflection are too much acted and govern'd by what their Sense suggests to them : A thing which by the Corruption of our Nature is become such an Appendage to it, that even those very Men who have been so happy as utterly to discard this Measure in the Conduct of their *Studies*, do yet retain it in the Management of their *Lives*, and while the *Philosopher* proceeds upon clear Intellectual Views, the *Christian* is guided and determined by Sensible Representations.

BUT this which is the Alloy and Mixture of all Spirits, makes up the whole Temper and Moral Constitution of some. There are Men (if I donor Mis-call

Mis-call them by that Name) whose whole Measure, whose whole Conduct, whose whole Life and Conversation, whose whole Heart and Affection, I had almost said whose whole Soul and Reason is nothing else but *Sense*, and who walk as much by it as those Creatures do which have no higher Principle. They will believe nothing but what they are inform'd of by their Senses, and for that Reason they will not allow God, Angels or Spirits, or so much as their own Souls a place in their Creed, because they *See* none of these things, and as they *Believe* nothing but Sensible *Beings*, so they can neither *Love*, *Taste*, or *Enjoy* any thing but Sensible *Good*. To tell them of the Pleasures of Reason, such as thoughtful Souls enjoy in the Contemplation and Discovery of Truth, or pious ones in the due Use and Management of their Moral Powers, the Delights of Meditation, or the Comforts of a good Conscience, is to set Colours before a Blind Eye, they have neither Notion nor Relish of the Matter. But should you offer to go so high as to discourse to them of the Joys of Heaven and the Beatific Fruition of God, they can no longer hold up under the Insipid stupifying Lecture, but infallibly drop asleep. They think of nothing but what is present and stands before them, and what by striking some *Sense* or other rouses their Notice, and they value nothing but what is in Hand, and what by its being there they can *Feel* to be *Substantial*. Futurities weigh but little with them, tho' within the Verge of this World, but to tell them of a glorious Reversion in *another* were instead of exciting their Faith, only to expose your own Credulity. They either cannot see to such a di-

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stance, or the Object appears so little, so faint, and so obscure, that they are no more mov'd at it than at one of the Feeble doubtful Lights of the Milky Way, when in the mean while every little trifling Pleasure or Interest of this present World is to them like the Sun at Noon, that not only Lights, but Warms them too, puts a new Motion into their Blood and Spirits, and quickens them with the Life of Spring. This Material, Visible, Sensible, Palpable, and (to speak all at once) this *Present* World is the World they are Fond of, and wholly solicitous for, they love it with Dearness, speak of it with Passion, enjoy it with Greediness, and leave it with Sorrow, and whatever glorious things are spoken of the City of God above, this is the place where they could be content for ever to take up their Rest, and spend their *Immortality*. One thing they desire, *Psal. 27. 4.* not that they may dwell in the House of the Lord all the Days of their Life, to behold the fair Beauty of the Lord, and to visit his Temple, but that they may have the Freehold of this Earth, enjoy the Perpetuity of it, and for ever (so poor and vile is their Ambition) feast their hungry Souls with the low Entertainments it affords. They (poor Creatures) have no Relish, if Conception of any higher, being to the full as much Dead and *Crucify'd* to the other World, as the Mortify'd *St. Paul* was to this. But to this they are alive, and for this think it worth while to live, and accordingly by this they conduct their Lives, making this the End of all their Thoughts and Motions, and the Measure of all those things which they call Good, Pleasant, or Profitable, which they will allow no further to be so, than as they

serve

serve the Interest of this present and worldly State and Life, thus *walking altogether by Sight, and not by Faith.*

THESE are those whom the Psalmist calls *Men of the World, who have their Portion in this Life,* *Psal. 17. 14.* all that they are ever *like*, and all that they ever *care*, to enjoy; and whom our Saviour sets forth by the more significant Title of *Children of this World, Luke 16. 8.* as if like the old Earth-born Race, they were naturally bred and engendred from it, begotten of the fruitful Slime, impregnated by the genial warmth of the Sun. And I fear these *Children of the World* make the greatest part of it; and some of them the greatest Figure in it. For if we go to the Courts of Princes, what is there but what flatters and entertains the Sense, and what are the Lives of all great Persons but continued Scenes of pompous Tumult, Noise and Shew, one great *Sensible Amusement?* If from these we come down to those of low Rank and Education, we shall find them yet deeper plung'd (tho' not so *richly set*) in the sensible Life, scarce minding any thing besides their little worldly Concernments. And, not to say any thing of the more heathenish and barbarous part of the World, we know a very considerable Body of Men, who not content to lead a Life of Sense here, have found out a way to translate it along with them into the other World, the supreme Felicity of which they are taught to place in a *Sensual Paradise*, so living by Sense, even while they live by Faith. But to what purpose should I mention particulars, when *Mankind* is sick of the same Disease, when the whole World runs upon the same Scent, and

Christians as greedily as any, who yet in one respect are more gross than the *Mahumetans*, as expecting a Spiritual Heaven hereafter, after a Sensible Life led here. A Sensual Life is indeed a very proper Preparation for a Sensual Paradise, but what can be so absurd as to look for a Heaven of refined and Spiritual Happiness, and yet lead a Life of Sense as an Introduction to it? And therefore tho' the *Mahumetan* be the greater *Epicure*, as carrying on his Sensuality through both Worlds, even beyond the *Grave*, where it naturally is extinguish'd, and where the *Christian* lets it fall, yet the *Christian* is the greater *Sot*, who having so Spiritual and so Divine a Faith, will yet chuse to live by Sense. Which yet most of them wholly, and all of them too frequently do.

BUT tho' this be too much the Practice, the quite contrary is the true Rule and Duty of Christians, to walk by Faith, not by Sight; to govern their Lives, not by what they see in this World, but by what they Believe and Expect in the next; and that for several Important Reasons.

I. BECAUSE, besides the Sin and the Misery, the Weakness and the Folly, and the many ill Examples and corrupt Principles which every where abound, they can see nothing in this World but what is *vain* and *unsatisfying*. The World indeed promises great things to its Lovers and Votaries, and truly to see Men so eager and warm in the pursuit of its Interests and Enjoyments, Pitying those that want them, and Envyng those who have them, one would be tempted to think there were really something in them. But the wisest and the greatest Enquirer found just nothing, and both

both those who were before him, and those who come after him have sped no better. And since Men have been hitherto disappointed in the Search of Happiness (tho' never any thing, no not *Truth* it self, was so narrowly look'd after) there is no reason why any Man should hope to find that *now*, which the whole World have been *till now* seeking in Vain. But were there no Experience in the Case, Reason alone would satisfy as many as would consult her, of the utter Vanity of all Sensible and Worldly Objects. For how is it possible that a Soul made capable of enjoying an Infinite Good should find Happiness or Satisfaction in any Creature? What Proportion is there between such an Object and such a Capacity! And how then can one fill the other? But now if all the things that the World can present to our Senses be but so many gilded Vanities, (as even Sense it self can witness that they are) then 'tis plain that they cannot be our *End*, and if they cannot be our *End*, then 'tis as plain that they ought not to be our *Measure*. We ought not therefore to govern our Lives by what we see here, nor reckon that Good or Evil, profitable or prejudicial to us, which is so at present and in a Worldly respect, since being not themselves the greatest Goods or Evils, they may come in Competition with *Greater*, and so lose and transpose their Natures, but we ought to have our Eye upon the other World, and reckon that only Good which serves to make us Happy there, and that only Evil which serves to make us Miserable there, where the Happiness and the Misery are both at the Height.

2. BECAUSE the things that we see here are not only internally vain and Deficient in their Natures, but also *transient and momentary in their Duration*, which may also be consider'd as one great part and instance of their Vanity. This is the Character of all Sensible Objects, nay, even of our Senses themselves, that they are but for a time, and that *Time* the Apostle tells us too is *Short*, 1 Cor. 7. 29. Our Bodies are built but for a little while, and our Senses oftentimes do not last so long, as if unwilling to stay to be Witnesses to the Ruins of their falling Tenements. But which soever gets to the Goal first, 'tis certain that they both hasten to Ruin as fast as they can, always wasting and mouldring away from us, and the World without us will not be long behind us, since the *Fashion* of it is continually passing away, always changing and shifting its Scenes, and rolling on as fast as the Wheels of the Sun, or the Wings of Time can carry it to its great Doom and final Dissolution. The short is, all things here have an End, and are drawing apace to it, we are hastening from the World, and the World from us, every thing turns upon the same Axis of Time, only some describe a larger *Circumference* than others, and so are the longer in finishing their *Circle*, but finish it they will all, and even Time it self shall be no more; and therefore we ought not to take our Measure from such passing and unstable things as these, which are here to Day and gone to Morrow, nor conduct our Lives and Conversations by them, but rather Steer our Course by the fixt and immovable *Points* of the other World, by those Goods and by those Evils which remain for ever, which

Sense

Sense cannot reach, which Faith only can see, and which Eternity only can measure. All which is but a larger Descant upon the Apostle's Ground, when he reasons thus, 2 Cor. 4. 18. *We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are Temporal, but the things which are not seen are Eternal.*

3. ANOTHER Reason why we should not govern our selves by what we see in this World, but by what we believe and expect in the next, is, *Because there is no universal Justice done to Men in this present World, according to the different Conduct of their Lives*; the compleat and final Administration of that being (for several wise and momentous Reasons) suspended and adjourned to another State. That this is so, need not be shewn, it being the great Objection of all bad Men, and the Complaint of many good ones, that Happiness and Misery are so promiscuously and indifferently dispens'd, that Men are not dealt with according to their doings, but that Vice usurps the Happiness which belongs to Virtue, and Virtue groans under the Calamity which is due to Vice. All Men see and Experience this, though all perhaps do not *Complain* of it, being sensible that sufficient Reasons may be assign'd from the present State of things to justify the Inequality of this Dispensation. But I am not to give an Account here of the Reason of the thing, my Concern at present is only to argue from the thing itself, that therefore *Faith* and not *Sight* is to be our Measure, the Measure both of our Judgments concerning others, and of our own Behaviour.

That we are to pass Judgment upon the Conditions of Good and Bad Men, not by what we see beset them at present (this being neither the Season nor the Place of Distinction and Recompence) but by the Rewards and Punishments which attend them in the other World. And that we are to order our own Behaviour either well or ill, not as we see Vertue depress'd, or Vice flourish in this Life, (where, as the Wise Man observes, *Eccl. 9.* Time and Chance happens to all, and where a Man knows neither Love nor Hatred by all that is before him) but by the respective Portions that shall be allotted to them in the next, when Persons, Things and Actions shall be weigh'd in a true Ballance, when every Man shall be rewarded according to his Works, and inherit either a Happy or a Miserable Eternity according to the good or ill Use he has made of Time. The Sum is, here Justice and Judgment slumber and sleep, like things happen to all, or if there be any difference made, 'tis on the side of Wicked Men, who commonly speed best. But hereafter the Divine *Nemesis* will awake, and that thoroughly, take to her her Sword and her Ballance, redress all the Inequalities that have happen'd during the time of her Slumber, and distribute to every one his own. Then Vertue shall recover her Right out of the Hands of Vice, and Vice shall be as miserable as it deserves. And therefore since we profess to believe this, we should live and govern our selves by this Faith, and proceed in our Choice of a good or bad Life by this Measure, and not by those visible Events which appear to our View in this Life, which is a state of *Trial*, not of *Reward*.

4. THERE is yet another very considerable Reason why it concerns all Christians thus to walk by Faith and not by Sight, and that is, *That the Privation of Sensible Good may not be a Punishment to them in the other World.* That there will be such a Privation is here supposed, and in it self most certain. Within a little while we must part with all Sensible Objects, and utterly lose the Enjoyment of them. Let us adhere to the Creatures never so closely, and hug and imbrace them never so dearly, we must let go our hold ; and let us tie our selves to them by never so many Knots, Death will dissolve them all, and make a final and thorough Divorce between us. For 'tis by our Union with our own Bodies that we are united to those other Bodies which surround us, and 'tis by the Mediation of our Senses that we have any intercourse with this material and sensible World, the Goods and Enjoyments of which, as great and as numerous as they are, hang all upon one single Thread, that of *Life*. When therefore that shall come to be cut, all will fall with it, the Enjoyments of Sense will all be at an End, and the whole Creation will at one blow be separated from us, and drop away under us. Now tho' this *Privation* of it self be no Punishment, it being no Pain to be without a thing, unless a Man at the same time desires it, since not the bare Absence but the Want of a thing is that which makes us uneasy, yet it will be extremely Painful and Afflictive wherever it meets with contrary Desires, and then indeed it is that it properly begins to be a *Privation*, which will be the Case, the sad Case of all those Spirits which depart hence

hence in the Love of Sensible Objects. For as the Soul is disposed at the Moment of Death, so will she be after Death, carrying the same Affections and Relishes with her out of the Body, which she once had in it, and which she will now retain for ever. In this Life the Will is in some Measure mutable and flexible even in the worst of Men, but the other Life being incapable of Change, it then becomes stiff and inflexible as the Decrees of Fate. What they then Love they Love always, and what they do then not Love they never will. The last Cast is then thrown, and as the Die falls it shall for ever lie. The Will shall then stand like the *Axis* of the Earth, fixt and stable to *immovable Points*, without any Variation or Declination. Which settled and stiddy Posture some conceive (and not improbably) to be express'd by that Order of the King in the Parable concerning the Guest that came to the Marriage without a Wedding Garment, *Mat. 22. 13.* *Bind him Hand and Foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer Darkness;* by Hand and Foot, meaning the Passions and Affections of the Soul, which shall then (how free soever now) be bound and tied up, and made incapable of altering their Posture. The Soul therefore whose unhappinels it is to depart hence hot and warm from the Imbraces of Sensible Objects, whose Affections are cleaving to them and ingaged upon them, who leaves the World in Person before she has left it in Heart, will always retain the same Love and Passion for these things, and yet be incapable of enjoying them, and consequently always miserable in the want of them. And none but those unhappy Spirits who feel this universal Privation are

able

able to tell how great the Desolation of it is, and to what Extremity of Poverty they then are reduced. Such to be sure as can never be felt in this Life, and of which all that we here call *Poverty* is but a faint Type or Shadow. If therefore we would have this total Privation of all sensible Objects, in which we shall unavoidably be all placed by Death, not to be painful and tormenting to us, we must now *detache* and disengage our Hearts from the Creatures, wean our selves betimes from the Love of sensible Objects ; (which by the way gives a good Account of the Reasonableness of true *Christian Mortification* and Self-denial) accustom our selves to despise what our Senses recommend to us as pleasant, learn to be without what is grateful to them, deny our sensual Appetites so long till they cease to crave, practise the way of separate Spirits before-hand, be as Intellectual as we can, die to the World while we live in it, and, in one word, learn to *Walk by Faith and not by Sight.*

AND how *Happy* is the Man that can do so ! that can conduct and govern his Steps by the bright Views of the other World, and not by the dim Appearances of this. That can walk so direct and upright, with his Eyes so fixt upon the things above, as wholly to overlook the Things, or rather the *Nothings* that are below. That can keep his Sight so intent upon Heaven and the Glory that shall there be reveal'd, as not to regard either the Enjoyments or the Sufferings of this present time, so fix'd upon *Eternity* as not to be moved by the Pleasures or by the Profits of Sin, which are but for a *Season*. That by the aid of an active and well grounded Faith can look beyond

yond all those painted Scenes of Vanity, which either the Devil, the World, or his own Flesh sets before him, and carry his Prospect into those remote Regions where Sense, tho' arm'd with a *Telescope* cannot reach so far into the other World as to enter within the Veil, and with *Moses*, even *to see him that is invisible*, *Heb. 11. 27.* That can (in fine) with the Apostle habituate himself to look at the things that are not seen, and that are Eternal, the bright invisible Objects of the other World, and that so long till his dazzled Eye can see no more of this, and his elevated Mind is wrought up not only to a Contempt, but even to a Forgetfulness of the little Earth upon which he dwells. O happy Oblivion of Earthly things which puts Heaven and Eternity in our View! Nothing which this visible World can set before us is worthy our regard, especially when at the End of the Landskip the invisible Glories of Heaven solicit and court our Love. Nothing which our carnal Eyes can present to us is fit to stay or ingage a Soul that is capable of enjoying God, none of these fading perishing Objects deserve a Room in that Heart, whose Capacity is infinite, and which was made for Eternity. Let us then shut our Eyes to this transient Scene, this *Vain Shew* of the World, and open them only to that which is truly worthy of our View, the Solid and Lasting Glories that attend the Faithful Walkers with God above, the Felicities of Heaven. Let these be always in our View, and by these *fixt Stars* let us steer our Course in this our Passage thro' the troublesome Waves of this World, and not by those *Wandering Meteors* which rise from the Earth. These are false Lights, and such as will end in Darkness.

Darkness. Let us not therefore sail by them, but take the *Stars of Heaven* for our Guides, those safe and tried Directors, that will not fail to conduct us to our Haven, thus walking by Faith and not by Sight, taking our Measures from the other World, and not from this, till we come to enjoy what we now believe, and our *Faith* be turn'd into *Vision*.

THE great Advantage of thus walking by Faith is, that it will help us to *overcome* the *World*, that is, to subdue the Impressions that are made upon us by the Creatures, and by the Devil that employs them to draw off our Minds from the Love of God, and from a Life of Devotion and Obedience to him. To suppress all wordly Passions and Inclinations, those especially which tempt us to place our Good and our Happiness in the things of the World, and forsaking the true Fountain of Living Water to apply our thirsty Mouths to these *Broken Cisterns* that can hold none. To be crucify'd to the World, and to have the World crucify'd to us, to be dead to its Pleasures, and insensible of its Charms, to turn the deaf Ear, and the blind Eye to all those Pomp's and Vanities of the World which we renounc'd at our Baptism, and to have it no longer in our *Hearts*, but under our *Feet*. To overcome those three triumphant Conquerors that are in the World, and whereof St. John makes the Sum total of it to consist, *the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life*, to be no longer Slaves to our Sensuality, our Covetousness, nor our Pride, or Ambition, or any of those false Relish-es and depraved Tasts of the Soul which dispose it to Mind and Savour the Earth, and Earthly things. Not to suffer our selves to be carried away

away with the Torrent of a vicious Age, or to have so much regard for the Manners, Customs or Authorities of a wicked World as to be conformed to them, or follow a Multitude to do Evil, not to be over-aw'd by great Examples, nor corrupted by bad ones. To be above the *Opinion* of the World, and not to hang upon the Censures or Applauses of Men, or upon their Kindness or Disaffection towards us ; nor to be transported into undue Passions by any of the Injustices, Unkindnesses, Affronts, Abuses, or Disappointments that we meet with in the World. To overcome the Evil as well as the Good of it, to bear its Frowns as well as not to be enchanted with its Smiles, and no more to be disturb'd at the Experiment and Discovery of its *Vanity*, than to be over-charm'd with its delusive *Shew of Happiness*, as well knowing that there is a Good proportioned to the importunity of our Appetites, and that the other World has Enjoyments that will fill that Emptiness of our Natures which this only deludes and stretches wider, and that will quench that Thirst which this only inflames. To be equal Proof against Prosperity and Adversity, so as not to be dispirited by the one, nor intoxicated by the other, but to carry an even and well-pois'd Mind in all the turns and varieties of a reeling and tottering World, and in whatever State we are, therewith to be content. To discover the great *Deceitfulness of Sin*, the Depths of Satan, the Mystery of Iniquity, those Cheats, I mean, and Fallacies whereby Evil presents it self to us, and too frequently imposes upon us, under the Appearance and Semblance of Good, and at the same time to be so fix'd and steady in what we know.

know to be *really* that which the other *seems*, that neither the Pleasures nor the Terrors of the World shall either intice or deter us from it. In fine, not to have our Virtue or our Goodness depend upon any Worldly Interests, Accidents, or Circumstances, nor upon any Juncture, Revolution, or Turn of the Times, but at all Times to keep exactly to what is right and fit, whether it pleases or not, whether we get or lose Friends or Preferment by it, and to resolve at any rate to please God, and satisfy our Consciences, however the World goes, and whatever the World says or thinks. This is to *overcome the World*, and a great Victory indeed it is, beyond those of the greatest Worldly Heroes and Conquerors. And 'tis a Life of Faith that will enable us to obtain this great Victory, according to that of the Apostle St. John, *This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith*, that is, a firm, hearty, and well-grounded Belief of the Truths of the Christian Religion, and an actual Consideration of those Truths, which will furnish us with unanswerable Answers to all those Temptations that the World can lay before us. For there are but two Passions whereby Man may be wrought upon, *Hope and Fear*; and there are but two Motives to work upon those two Passions, that is, *Good and Evil*. But now Faith with one Hand points out to us infinitely greater Goods, and with the other infinitely greater Evils than any the World has to propose to us. It opens one Scene to us and shews us Heaven, it opens another and shews us Hell. And after two such Prospects as these, what, what can the World present to our View that shall be worthy of its regard?

gard? And how poor an Impression will be made upon our Hearts, by *All this will I give thee*, when this present World is so much out-bid by the Faith of the Next! But then it must not be *any* Faith that can do all this, not a few slight, superficial, transient Acts of it, but a firm, hearty and thorough Belief, such as abides upon our Minds, and goes into the ordinary Habit of our Thoughts, which we daily carry about with us, and constantly converse with, it must be a *Walking by Faith*. For the Temptations of the World consist of present Goods and present Evils, and this is the great Advantage that the Devil has above Christ, that he courts our Affections, bribes our Passions, and cheapens our Souls with *ready Money in his Hand*. And therefore unless we can set one Certainty against another, oppose Evidence to Evidence, the Evidence of Reason and Faith to the Evidence of Sense, the Scale that holds the World (as light as it is) will weigh down the other, and our prejudic'd Hearts will give Sentence for Earth against Heaven. For what though there be no Comparison between the good things of the other World and the good things of this, or between the Evils of the other World and the Evils of this, absolutely consider'd, yet will not the Advantage of *Presentness* and *Certainty* make the latter more prevalent with us, and what likelihood is there that the things of the other World (as great as they are) faintly and imperfectly believ'd should have that Force and Influence upon our Hearts, as the things of this which we see with our Eyes, and feel with our Hands? But when once our *Faith* of the other World comes to be like the

the *Sense* of this, and we are as well assured of Heaven and Hell, as of any of those Sensible Objects which touch us with their Impressions, what Temptation then would find Audience, or so much as Admittance with us, and what would all the World be to a Man that firmly and heartily believes these great things, and *Walks* by the Faith and serious Consideration of them.

But oh how Difficult a thing is it to lead this Life of Faith while we carry these Bodies of Flesh and Blood about us, and Converse with a Sensible World, and which is worse with *Sensual Men*! The Soul being plunged in Sense, is hardly touch'd but with Sensible things, which being so near her, and (by the Body's side) so near a *kin* to her, have a Strange Influence upon her, and affect her with most vigorous and lively Passions, not by reason of the greatness of the Objects (for alas they are not Considerable) but by the Force and Manner of the Impression. For this reason it is that there are so Few that walk by Faith, and that can turn their Eyes from Temporal things, and hold them fixt upon those that are Eternal. The Generality of Mankind (as I observ'd in the beginning) are wholly taken up with Sensible Objects, and have no Taste, hardly so much as *Faith* for any thing beyond them. And as for those Few that are otherwise ingaged, and that live by other Measures (especially if they venture to talk now and then of the other World, or to say any thing of *Spirits* and *Apparitions*) they are look'd upon as a sort of whimsical Brainsick Men, mere *Visionaries*, that indulge their Melancholy, and fright themselves with Spectres of their own raising. If then we will be of the number of

those Few that abandoning the Measures of Sense, dare betake themselves to a Life of Faith, we must be Content to undergo a great deal of Pain and Travail within, and a great deal of Scorn and Derision without, we must walk Circum-spectly, not as Fools, but as Wise, and yet be counted Fools, and that by those whom the World esteems Wise, and who have the Creditable Name of *Wits*. And if we cannot bear this we must go out of the World. And so it would be best to do however, I mean to retire from the Noise and Hurry of it as much and as far as we can, to rid our selves of all its Weights and Incumbrances, to be as loose from it, and have as little to do in it, and as few Concerns with it as possibly we may, that so Distance and Absence (that which so cools our Affections to the other World) may make us indifferent to this, prevent our taking new Impressions, and wear out those we have already receiv'd. But we must retire into our Selves as well as from the World, be much in Contemplation of its Vanity (the only side of the World that deserves our Consideration) think Continually upon Eternity, and after all Pray earnestly with the Psalmist, *Psal. 119.* that God would turn away our Eyes, least they behold *Vanity*, and quicken us in his way, That narrow unfrequented way of *Faith*, which only leads to Life and Glory.

AND so much concerning the First Part II. Sense of the Words, that which expresses the *Duty*, I now go on to Consider the Second Sense, that which expresses the *State and Condition* of Man in this World, which

which the Apostle here represents to be a State of Faith, not of Vision, if we suppose him (as we now do) to refer Faith and Vision to one and the same Object, and that Object to be a Future Life. In reference to which our present Condition (as he tells us) is to *Walk by Faith and not by Sight.*

BEFORE I go any further, I cannot but observe the difference that already appears between the *State* and the *Practice* of Men. The Practice of Men generally is to *Walk by Sight, not by Faith*, but the State of Men on the Contrary is to *Walk by Faith, not by Sight*. Concerning which last, that our following Account may be the more Clear and Orderly, it shall be disposed into this Form.

FIRST, I shall state the Notions of these Two Fundamental Terms here, upon which all rests, *Faith and Sight.*

SECONDLY, I shall shew, *That the Present State of Man, in reference to the other World, is not a State of Sight, but of Faith.*

THIRDLY, I shall endeavour to offer such Considerations as shall justify the Wisdom and Goodness of God in allotting this latter State to Man while he is in this World.

To begin with an Account of the First of these, by Faith I suppose every Body would be understood to Mean an Assent or Persuasion of the Mind founded upon Testimony or Authority. And if the Testimony be of God then we call it Divine Faith, if of Man then we call it Human Faith. The General Nature of Faith is the same

in each, since they both rely upon Testimony, only as the Testimony differs the Faith also varies, and Human Testimony differing from Divine as much as Fallible differs from Infallible, the same in Proportion will also be the difference between Human and Divine Faith. Which yet seems rather a Gradual than a Specific Difference, the only Effect which the different Quality of the Testimony has upon the Assent being to give it a higher Degree of Certainty and Assurance. And thus is Faith distinguish'd into Human and Divine; though when we speak of Faith Absolutely and Simply, we are presumed to intend *Divine* Faith, which also I suppose to be that which is intended in this place.

By Sight here, as opposed to Faith, we may understand either the Vision of a thing, or the clear Perception of Truth. For Sight is Two-fold as well as Faith, that of the Sense which perceives such Objects as are proportion'd to it, and that of the Mind which discerns things of a proportionate Nature by their proper Light. The former I would call Sensible, the latter Intellectual Sight. This Intellectual Sight is the same with *Knowledge*, and admits again of a double Order being either *Intuitive*, or *Demonstrative*. *Intuitive* when we perceive the Agreement or Disagreement of one Idea with another immediately and by themselves, without the Mediation of any other Idea. *Demonstrative*, when this Agreement or Disagreement is perceiv'd, not immediately by Comparing the Ideas with themselves, but mediately by Comparing them with a Third, that is, when we perceive that they agree or disagree with themselves, as we find them to agree or disagree with some Third Idea, which we are often forc'd

forc'd to make use of as a Common Measure, because we cannot always so Collate and Confront our other Ideas together as to see whether they agree or no by their mere Comparison. This Third intervening Idea is what we usually call a Medium or *Proof*, the Process of the Mind by it from one thing to another is *Reasoning*, and the Discovery that results from it is what we properly call *Science*, which in short is neither more nor less than a clear Perception of a Conclusion by clear and certain Principles or Premises. I say *Clear*, for this is the great difference that distinguishes it from Faith. For Faith may be *Firm*, because he that believes in God does not hesitate or doubt of the truth of what he reveals. And it may also be certain, because it may rely upon the most certain Foundation, the Testimony of God, who is Infallible in himself, and cannot deceive. And thus far it stands upon a level with Science. But herein it comes short of it in that it is not *Clear* or *Evident*. For he that Believes does not give his Assent, because either by Sense or Reason he perceives the thing to be thus or thus, but merely because he has the Word of God for it. Which though it be enough to found a Firm and Certain, is not however enough to beget a *Clear* and *Evident* Assent.

FROM this Account of Faith and Sight it appears that the great and distinguishing Character of Sight is Light and Evidence, and that of Faith Inevidence and Obscurity. Not that this Obscurity is to be applied to the Formal Reason of Faith (which may be clear enough, and sometimes as clear as any Natural Light) but to the Matter or Object of it. For we are Carefully to distinguish between the thing believ'd, and the

Reason or Motive that induces us to believe it. There may be a clear Reason why a Man should believe an Obscure thing. But then as the Reason is never the less Clear because the Matter is Obscure, so neither is the Matter ever the less Obscure because the Reason is Clear. Not that this again is so to be understood, neither as if the Matter of Faith were absolutely and in it self inevident, and such as could not be known. For (notwithstanding the decision of some Eminent Schoolmen to the contrary in this Point) I can well Conceive that the same Proposition may be at once the Object of both Faith and Science. And should God reveal to me any Mathematical Truth, as suppose that two Triangles having the same Base, and being within the same Parallels, are Equal ; and should I who at first receiv'd it upon his Authority, come afterwards to be able to Demonstrate it my self upon the Known Principles of Art, who, that well Considers the Natures of these things, would say that my Science evacuated my Faith, and that I ceased to be a Believer, as soon as I became a Philosopher ? And who I wonder would refuse a Demonstrative Account (if it might be had) of a Revealed Truth, suppose, of the Creation of the World, merely for fear of injuring his Faith, which yet he were bound in Conscience to do if Inevidence and Obscurity were so absolutely of the Essence of Faith as some pretend : For then it would be unlawful to inform ones self by Study of the Natural Account of any reveal'd Truth, because 'tis unlawful to destroy ones Faith, which I think is a Scruple that can hardly Enter, to be sure never stay long in any considering Head. When therefore the Object of Faith is Charged with Obscurity,

and

and Faith is said (as it Commonly is) to be of In-evident things, the Meaning is not of an *Absolute*, but of a *Relative* inevidence. Not that what is Believ'd is so all over dark and obscure that it cannot (while believ'd) absolutely be known, but only that it cannot under that Formality, and so far as it is *Believ'd*, being always in that respect inevident, how bright and clear so ever it may be in other respects. The short is, let the Object be never so evident and demonstrable in it self, and upon other Accounts, yet as *Believ'd* it is always Obscure, Faith having no regard to the proper Light and Evidence of the Thing, but only to the Testimony of the Revealer, whose bare Authority is the only Ground she builds her Assent upon, though the Truth of the thing it self, absolutely Consider'd, may also stand upon other Foundations, and be rationally proved by Arguments from within, and so be seen by its own Light. But let the Light shine never so bright upon the Object from other Sides, Faith lets in none, nor has any regard to that which she finds there, but walks with her Eyes Shut, contenting her self with the certainty of Revelation, and leaving to Science the Evidence of the thing; So that the Object is always dark to her, how clear and lightsome soever it may be in it self. Wherein it falls very short of the Perfection of Science, though in respect to Firmness and Certainty it may be equal to it. All which is briefly Couch'd in that Excellent Account of Faith given by the Author to the *Hebrews*, when he says, *Heb. 11. 1.* that 'tis the *Substance of things hoped for, and the Argument of things not seen.* Where by Substance and Argument he equals it with Science in regard of

the Firmness and Certainty of the Assent, but by saying that 'tis of things *noot seen*, he makes it Vail and Stoop to it in point of Evidence, in which respect indeed Faith is as much inferior to Sight, as Darknes is to Light.

I have dwelt the longer upon this Matter, and Discours'd it the more nicely, partly that the Limits between Faith and Sight being duly set, and their Differences well adjusted, it may appear that there is not that Repugnancy between Faith and Reason that is pretended by some, who decry Philosophy as inconsistent with Faith, and therefore not fit for a Christian (since, as has been shewn, they are not such Enemies but that they can both dwell under the same Roof) and partly, that it may appear how imperfect and defective a State of Faith is in comparison of Sight, as having nothing of that Light and Brightness wherewith the other so clearly Shines, that so we may be touch'd with the more lively Sentiment of Humility and Self-dejection, when we shall come to understand that this dark Obscure State is that which is allotted to us while we are in this World. Which leads me to shew,

S E C O N D L Y, *That the present State of Man in reference to the other World is not a State of Sight, but of Faith.* Some will tell you, and with great shew of Reason too, that this is the State of Man in Reference even to *this* World, of whose Existence we can be convinc'd only by Faith, there being no strict Demonstration (though many Sensible Presumptions) for it, as indeed there is not, according to them, for any thing but God and our own Souls, which are the only Objects to the belief of whose Existence they will allow us

to

to be determin'd by any certain and insuperable Argument. I shall not indulge Curiosity so far as to enter into a discussion of this Matter. Only I here remarque that whatever Assurance, besides the Word of God for it, we may have of the *Existence* of a Material World, the *Nature* of things however is so dark and overshadow'd, so retired and withdrawn from our View, that though I cannot well say that we walk here by *Faith*, since God has not thought it worth while to make us any Revelation about these Matters, yet I think I may say that we Walk by any thing rather than by *Sight*. For alas what is it that we *See*? Nothing but the Shell and Surface of things, and there too only the grosser and ruder Strokes of Nature's Pencil. Our Natural Senses are too dull, and so are our Artificial ones too, to hold any Proportion with the Works of God, who even in *these* his ways is unsearchable and past finding out. Glasses discover to us many things, but leave us ignorant of a great deal more; and the greatest thing which they help us to see is the defect of our own Sight. Besides our Senses are so *Fallacious* too as well as *dull*, that instead of Building upon their Reports, one of the greatest *Atchievements* of our Understandings is to Correct their Errors, which take such early Possession of our Souls, and grow up so familiarly with us from our Infancy, that they settle into so many inveterate Prejudices, which we are afterwards apt to Confound with the dictates of the purest Reason, and 'tis late, if ever, that we discover our so confirm'd and so *Naturalized* Mistake. But Suppose we do, and that never so early too, yet how Contracted will be the Sphere of our Science, and

and how little is it we are ever like to know of the things about us, when even our Reason (the Great Instrument of our Knowledge and our so much valued and boasted Perfection) is founded upon the Narrowness of our Minds, which not being able to Judge of the Truth or Falshood of a Proposition by the mere Comparison of the two Ideas which Compose it, are fain to have recourse to a Third, and so from something more Known to proceed in the Search of what is Unknown. If then the Light which is in us be Darkness, how great is that Darkness, as our Saviour said in another Case. The Truth is, the Eyes of our Understanding are so dark, and our Intellectual Views so short, that after all our Study, we know little more of the World we live in (besides the *Geography* of it, and a few of its greater *Motions*) than of the remotest Regions in the Planetary Orbs. The whole Earth is to us as one great *America*, and though Men will dig as deep in it for *Knowledge* as they do for *Gold*, yet we are not only utter Strangers to its inner Regions, but to its Surface too, every thing we meet with there wears its Mask and Veil, and passes by us *incognito*, we converse with Riddles and Wonders, the least things puzzle and amuse us as well as the Greatest, and *Nature*, the Constant Subject of our Philosophy, has its *Mysteries* as well as *Faith*. So that we can hardly be said even with respect to this World to *Walk by Sight*.

Much less then in respect of the other, which is parted and skreen'd from us by an impenetrable Veil; and like the Top of Mount Sinai when God was there, all wrapt up in Clouds and thick Darkness. *Between us and you, said Abraham to* the

the rich Man, there is a great Gulph fix'd : So that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence, Luk. 16. 26. And the like may be said here, there being as truly a Gulph fix'd (though not altogether so impassable a One) between the other World and this, as between Heaven and Hell. *χάσμα μεταξύ μέρος*, a Great Establish'd Gulph, a settled interval, a Fatal Distance. Not only a Gulph too wide to be pass'd over, but a Partition Wall too thick to be look'd through, divides the Intellectual from the Material World, so that allowing only for extraordinary Cases, there is no Commerce or Communication to be had between them. Nor are they acquainted with each others State and Condition, but are mere *Night* and *Mystery* to one another. Or whatever they of the other World may know of ours (as having been once here) we at least know nothing of theirs, and a great many of us I'm afraid care not whether they ever do or No. But the most Curious and Inquisitive must here be Content to be as ignorant as the most Careless and Regardless, and what Solomon observes of *untimely Births* is as true in another Sense of the most *Mature* ones, nay of the most Aged Livers, that *they come in with Vanity, and depart in Darkness*, Eccl. 6. 4. know nothing of the Place and State whither they are going, the dark invisible *Hades* ; but are notwithstanding all their Wisdom and Experience in other things full as ignorant of the other World, as unborn Infants are of this, as having neither *Sense* nor *Notion* of it. So that there is no Walking here by Sight (unless we could see in the Dark, without a Beam of Light to direct us) we may perhaps

perhaps Feel out our Way by the Clue of Faith, and that's as much as the Wisest of us all can hope to do.

FOR First, As to the *Existence* of another World or State after this, we believe indeed that there is and will be such a thing, and have (no doubt) good Foundation for this our Belief, but we have no *Knowledge* of it, strictly speaking, such I mean as is founded upon *Rational Evidence*. Our Reason indeed (if not Bribed and Corrupted by our Passions) will represent it as a very probable and reasonable Supposition, but all the positive and decisive Certainty we have of it is from the Revelation of Jesus Christ, who is therefore said to have brought Life and Immortality to Light through the *Gospel*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. Which he may be said to have done, not only because it was never Clearly and Fully reveal'd before (this being one of those *Mysteries* which St. *Paul* says, *Rom.* 16. 25. were kept Secret from the Beginning of the World) but because it was *Knowable* only by Revelation, the Light of Natural Reason not being able to determine it. So that in both Respects Jesus Christ is the First *Discoverer* of the other World. Reason indeed, by its own Light may discover so much of the Reasonableness of the thing as to dispose Men to the more ready Belief of it when it comes to be plainly reveal'd, but 'tis Revelation only that makes it Certain, and we believe by our *Faith* what we could never demonstrate by our *Reason*. The old Philosophers 'tis true would now and then talk of the other World, as a very probable Supposition, much after the same rate as some of the *New Ones* do of a *World in the Moon*, Problematically, and Conjecturally,

jecturally, but 'tis the Christian only that has Assurance of a World to come; and 'tis to his *Faith*, not his *Reason* or *Sense*, that he is beholden for it.

So again Secondly, As to the *Nature* of a Future State, we believe in general that the Soul shall survive the Body, and Subsist when separated from it, but whether in a *Vehicle* or without one, whether she shall retain her former Senses, and whether any New ones shall be awaken'd in her, where she shall be during the State of Separation, whether she shall go immediately to Heaven or Hell, or to some Common Repository or place of Custody, there to abide till the General Judgment; and if the latter of these, how deceas'd Spirits shall spend their time in those Middle Mansions, and what Distinction there shall be between the Good and the Bad; whether they shall be distinguish'd by Place, or only by State and Condition, these are things which Exercise the *Thoughts* of some, and the *Passions* of others, which a great many Dispute and Contend about, but which no Body *Knows*. So that Considering our Ignorance of the Soul's A-bode, and Manner of being in the other World, the same may be said of every well departed Spirit, that the Author to the *Hebrews* says of *Abraham*, *Heb. 11. 8.* that when he was call'd to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, he by *Faith* obey'd, and went out, not knowing whither he went. Again, we believe there shall be a *Resurrection*, but how the Dead shall be Rais'd, and with what Body they do come, that is, how their Bodies shall be Modify'd and Organiz'd, what their Powers and Capacities, and accord-ing

ing to what Age, Bulk, and Stature they shall rise; and how the Bodies of the Damn'd shall differ from the Bodies of the Saints, are things which (though defined by some School-men with great Boldness) we must all Confess our selves to be equally ignorant of, and that we know no more how, than when we shall rise. And thus again we Believe there shall be a Heaven and a Hell, but where Hell is, whether in the Central parts of the Earth, or in the Air, or in some of the other Planets, or in the Ethereal Regions about the Sun and fixt Stars, what the Punishments are there; particularly whether its Fire be Material; and if so, what Immortal Fuel that must be which can Everlastingly feed its Hungry Flames; all this we know not any thing of, as I pray God we never may. But we are as ignorant of Heaven too, where it is, and what it is, and what its Felicities are; whether they consist Chiefly in the Perfection of the Understanding or Will, in the Love or in the Vision of God; and if in the Latter, how we shall see God, whether Sensibly or Intellectually; and if Intellectually, whether our Knowledge will be Sudden and Instantaneous, or (as a late Ingenious Writer more probably Contends) Eternally progressive and ever increasing, we are much in the dark as to these and the like things relating to a Future World, in a double Darkness, wanting not only the Light of *Science*, but in great Measure, even that of *Faith* too, God having thought fit to reveal to us a Future State in General, but to leave the Particularities of it still Seal'd up from our View, as Secrets reserv'd to Himself. And so we are expressly told by two Apostles, St. *Paul* tells us, *1 Cor. 2. 9.* that

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Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have enter'd into the Heart of Man the things which God has prepared for them that love him. And St. John tells us, Joh. 3. 2. that it does not yet appear what we shall be. In vain therefore do we inquire, we are ignorant, and must be Content to be so till Death shall draw the Curtain, open to us a New Scene, and present to our View that Sovereign Good, and those bright Glories which no Man can See and Live. That which at present is both more Possible and Necessary for us is (instead of Curious Researches) by emptying our Hearts of Worldly Desires, and purifying them from Carnal Lusts, to prepare our Souls for a State of *Sight*, even that which is Beatific, and in the Mean time to rest Contented with the more humble and obscure one of *Faith*, as that which the Infinitely Wise God has thought fittest for us, and is indeed more suitable to our Present Circumstances. Which brings me to the last Part of my Undertaking, which is

THIRDLY, To offer such Considerations as shall justify the Wisdom and Goodness of God in allotting this Latter State to Man while he is in this World. 'Tis Strange there should be ever any Occasion to Apologize for the Conduct of God, but there are Proud Spirits in the World who are as ready to Charge him Foolishly in this as in any other Instance of his Providence, and the rather because it is a Check to their Curiosity, and a Mortification to their Proud Reason, which would have Nothing, much less such great things as the Objects of the other World, Eclips'd from its View. This I fear is the true ground of their dissatisfaction, but they pretend another, and such

such as is taken from Religion, for which these Men have a strange Kindness whenever it will help them to an Objection against it self. For say they, if we must renounce (as you tell us) this World which we see; is it not fit we should also have a Sight of the other World which is to Counterballance and outweigh it? Is there any Proportion between the Sight of this World and the bare Belief of the next? Ought not Seeing to be set against Seeing, to make the Scales hang even, that so we may make first a just Comparison, and then a wise Choice? And why then does God keep us so in the Dark as to the things of another Life, when those of this are set before us in so fair a Light, and require us to renounce a Visible and a Sensible World for one which is behind the Curtain, and which we only *Believe*? Either let us be in the dark as to both Worlds, and so chuse Blindfold, or if we see one of them, let the other be brought in View too. Thus the *Libertines*, and Profane Spirits of the Age are apt to Reason, or rather Mutiny against the Ways of God: But as Wisdom will be sure to be justified of her Children, and of her Enemies too, hereafter, so there are very good Reasons at present to be assigned why God should use this Dispensation towards Mankind.

As First, *This Dispensation is most agreeable to the order of things in the Natural World*, wherein God's ordinary Method is to begin with what is less Perfect, and thence to advance to what is more Perfect. Thus in the first Formation of things we find that Chaos and Confusion went before Order, and Darkness was Elder Brother to Light,

Light. And Nature goes on in the same Course wherein it begun. For thus when in the Spring the Sun returns to visit and comfort the desolate Earth, the Trees bring forth first the tender Bud, then the Blossom, then the Fruit, which also by Degrees arrives to its just Perfection. And the like our Saviour observes concerning the Production of Corn, *Mark 4. 28.* that *the Earth brings forth first the Blade, then the Ear, after that the full Corn in the Ear.* And thus again in the great Restitution of things we are told, that after the Dissolution of this present Fabrick, there shall be a more perfect and glorious System rais'd, new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness. And to go no further than our own Bodies, we find that of the two States which belong to them, the more excellent is reserv'd to be the last. For so the Apostle ranges them, *1 Cor. 15. 44, 46.* *There is a Natural Body, and there is a Spiritual Body; Howbeit that was not first which is Spiritual, but that which is Natural, and afterward that which is Spiritual.* This is the Order of our Bodies, the less perfect of which is to usher in the more perfect: In the mean time we serve our first Apprentiship to Nature, in the dark Retirements of the Womb, before we are privileg'd to see the Light of the Sun, and then too we have not our Freedom all at once, but are Children before we are Men. But now God is uniform and conformable in all his ways, and proceeds in the Methods of Grace by the Steps of Nature. It is therefore reasonable and decorous that the Oeconomy of Faith should go before that of Vision, as a less perfect before a more perfect State, that we should see thro' this Glass darkly before we see

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clearly and Face to Face, and we have no more Cause to complain that we now walk by Faith and not by Sight, than that we have not now Spiritual, but Terrestrial Bodies. Which yet is a thing Men are so far from complaining of, that they are well pleas'd with them, and are willing to keep them as long as they can.

SECONDLY, *This Dispensation is most agreeable, as to the Nature of things, so to the Nature of Man, and his present Circumstances in the World.* The Nature of Man in this Mortal State is not capable of any greater Light as to the things of another World than that of *Revelation*, nor of that neither in its fuller Degrees and brighter Communications. And accordingly there are many things relating to the other Life which God does not reveal to us, because he cannot, not thro' any defect in Him, but in us, because we cannot receive such Revelations, because indeed they would be no Revelations to us, because we could not read the Book tho' he should *unseal* it; and therefore he does not, but keeps it fast for the very same Reason that our Saviour Christ declin'd to impart many great things relating to himself and the future State of the Christian Church to his Disciples, because of their incapacity. *I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now, Job. 16. 12.* And this is exactly our Case in reference to the things of another World, *we cannot bear them now.* Not even the Revelation of many of them, much less their open and naked Theory. Our present Faculties are both too dull to have a Sight of the Heavenly Glories, and too weak to endure such a Sight if it might be had. First too dull to have it. For this

this Sight must be either that of the *Sense* or that of the *Mind*. But our Senses are too gross for Objects so refined, and our Understandings too narrow for Objects so vast. And accordingly God who knows exactly the Proportion of both to his own glorious Perfections has plainly told us that (whatever our Curiosity may aspire to) he is not an Object for a mortal View. *Thou canst not see my Face*, *Exod. 35. 20.* says he to *Moses*, when not contented with Faith, he would have walk'd by Sight, *for there shall no Man see me and Live*. To the like purpose the Apostle who had been so far in the other World as not to know whether he had left his Body behind him or no, speaking of God, tells us, *1 Tim. 6. 16.* that he dwells in the Light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath seen, or can see. The Glories of Heaven it seems are not only unseen, but *invisible*, and the Soul can no more see thro' her Body into the other World, than an Infant can see thro' his Mother's Womb into this. The short is, these are not Objects either for carnal Eyes, or for imbody'd Understandings, and as Flesh and Blood cannot inherit, so neither can a Soul that is cloathed with it see the Kingdom of God, because indeed that would be in a Measure to inherit it, since even the sight of such Divine Objects cannot but be highly ravishing, and I may say, *Beatific*. For which reason, as we cannot now have such a Sight, so neither Secondly, could we bear it if we had it. Mortality is too infirm to indure so much of Heaven upon Earth. So great a Light would dazzle our Eyes, confound our Understandings, deluge and overflow our Souls, and so ravish and transport our Affections,

that the Feebleness of our Nature being no longer able to support it self under such high Tides of Passion, we should not only be forc'd to cry out with the Amorous Spouse in the *Canticles*, *Stay me with Flagons, comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of Love*, but should even really expire and die ; the disproportionate and too prevailing force of the Divine Glories would break in with that Violence upon us as to dissolve our Frame and melt us down into a State of Separation, so that *Mortality* (as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 5. 4.) *would really be swallowed up of Life*. We know that a few Beams of this excellent Glory (as St. Peter calls it) that ray'd forth through our Saviour's Body at the Transfiguration, put his amazed Disciples almost beyond their Senses, they could sleep undisturb'd at the Approaches of his Bloody Passion, but could not bear the Essays of his Glorification. And St. Paul when rapt up into the third Heaven was so little himself there, that he knew not whether he was dead or alive, whether in or out of the Body. And what then would the full Display of that astonishing Scene do, and how should we be able to endure its Light and Grandeur ! So that if we consider only the *Nature* of Man, it appears very necessary that God should cast a shade over the now insupportable *Glories of Heaven*, at which the very Angels themselves are represented as covering their Faces, and that we should see them here no otherwise than through the Veil of *Faith*. I say the *Nature* of Man requires this ; but do not also his present *Circumstances* in the World require the same ? Man is born for Society, being unable to live without it, and Society can subsist no longer than the

the great Wheel of Business, Trade, mutual Traffick and Commerce goes round. But now should God draw the Curtain and open to us the glittering Scenes of the other World, it would give an immediate arrest to all the Motions of this, put a sudden stop to all Business, and call Men off not only from the necessary *Affairs*, but Moral *Duties* too of Human Life, who when they should be attending their proper Concerns upon Earth, would (with the Men of *Galilee*, *Acts* 1. 11.) be staring and stand gazing up into Heaven. But neither will the present Circumstances of Man permit this upon another Account. The Life of Man here is a State of Trial and Probation, he is now upon his Behaviour in order to a better World, and a Sight of that World is part of his Reward. But now it is not fit that a Labourer should have his Reward while he is doing his Work, much less such a Reward as would hinder him from ever doing it. So that whether we consider the Nature of Man or his present Circumstances, they both make it necessary that God should use this Dispensation towards him, and we may conclude from both, that tho' it be not best in it *Self*, yet 'tis at present best for him that he should walk by *Faith*, not by *Sight*. But besides,

THIRDLY, God has also many wise and good Ends to serve by this Dispensation both in reference to the bettering the Moral State of Man, and the Advancement of his own Honour and Glory. For by thus hiding the *Mysteries* of the other World from our sight, he makes Man in the first place do a sort of *Penance* for his first irregular Curiosity and intemperate Thirst after

Knowledge, in desiring the inlightning Fruit, and for aspiring to be as wise as his Maker. Again, by setting such narrow Bounds to our Sight, God gives the more scope and compass to our Faith, which tho' (as has been remark'd before) it can absolutely dwell with Science, yet, as not having so much room, cannot act so freely as when it has the whole Man to it self. The less we know, the more intire is our Faith, and the darker the Object of it is, the more its own Vertue and Glory shines. God therefore by shortning and contracting our View gives us an Opportunity of raising the Worth and Merit of our Faith, which will contribute to *inlarge* our View too at the proper Season for it, by intitling us to a higher Degree of the Beatific Vision, according to our Saviour's Answer to St. Thomas, Job. 20. 29. *Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* By this means again God teaches us to depend upon him, to trust in him, to acknowledge his Authority and Veracity, to have recourse to him for further Light and Instruction, and in the mean while to set the greater Value upon those Revelations he has already made to us, to exercise the Virtues of Patience, Contentedness, Divine Resignation and Hope (for what a Man sees what does he yet hope for) and to submit our high Reasonings, and cast down our towering Imaginations, and every thing that exalts it self against the Wisdom and Conduct of God, and to bring into Captivity every thought to the Obedience of Faith; in one word, to renounce the Light of our Reason, to follow the Clue of Revelation, and to deny our *Understandings*,

ings, which is as great, if not a greater Mortification than the Denial of our Wills. Again, lastly, God by thus darkening our Views takes the most effectual Method to correct our Pride, to instruct us in the most profound Humility, and to bring us to a sober Sense and right understanding of our selves. The way to manage People whose Heads are distemper'd is to keep them in the *Dark*. And so God deals with us, he keeps us in the Dark, in perfect Ignorance of the things of another Life, that so by the advantage of Silence and Obscurity he may compose and recollect our Spirits (which too much Light and Splendour would be apt to scatter and disperse) and so cool our Spiritual Fever, and reduce our Intellectual Pulse to a moderate Temper, that so (as the Apostle expresses it, *Rom. 12. 3.*) we may *εγεννητοι το ουρανον* think soberly, and as we ought to think, or be Wise unto Sobriety.

THESE Considerations might be more at large set forth, and to them likewise many others added to shew the Reasonableness of God's allotting the state of Faith and not of Sight, to Man while he is in this World, but I think what has been offer'd may suffice to Account for the Dispensation, and to convince all that will consider it, that Sight can no more consist with the Condition of this present Life, than Faith can with that of the next, and that therefore it is expedient we should now *Walk* by Faith, as hereafter we shall *Rest* in Vision. And this notwithstanding the foremention'd Objection of those who plead the Sight of the other World as necessary to counterbalance the Sight of this, to which the Answer is easy in few Words, that God may very justly require us to renounce a World which we See and Feel, for a World which

we only believe, supposing (which is the Case) that there be sufficient Ground for such our Faith, and that the Object believ'd be of that importance as to compensate the want of higher Evidence.

AND thus having given some Account of the Text, I shall now in short make a few Practical Reflections (by way of Inference) upon the latter Part of my Discourse, and so conclude.

AND First then, Since it has pleased the Wisdom of God to allot to us a State of Faith, not of Sight, while we are in this World, this should teach us *Humility*, a thing which highly becomes us as *Creatures*, but much more as *Creatures* under such a low and imperfect Dispensation, as such dark and hoodwink'd *Creatures*. *Be ye Cloathed with Humility*, says St. Peter, *1 Pet. 5. 5.* and sure we cannot appear in a more proper Habit, nor put on a more seasonable and therefore more becoming Dress while we are in this State and Region of Mortality, this dark Vale of Tears, while we inhabit these obscure Houses of Clay, while we wear this corruptible Body that so presses down the Soul, this Body of our *Humiliation* (as the Apostle very emphatically stiles it, *Phil. 3. 21.*) that stands so much in our Light, and Eclipses from our View no less than the whole State of the other World. If a little Knowledge be so apt to puff us up, sure so great an Ignorance should much rather humble and cast us down.

AGAIN, Secondly, If it be our present Lot to walk by Faith and not by Sight, then we ought to *Believe* tho' we do not *See*, and our not *Seeing* is no reasonable Objection against our *Believing*.

lieving. Not that we are to believe we know not what, or we know not why. No, Faith is so much an Act of Reason as to require that we understand the simple meaning of the Proposition we are to believe, and withal the Grounds of Credibility upon which it challenges our Assent. So that the *Formal Reason* of Faith is a visible thing, and our not Seeing here is indeed an Objection against our Believing. But when I say it is not, my meaning is, that whensoever it appears to us that a thing is plainly and expressly reveal'd, we are to believe it upon the Credit of the Revealer, tho' we are not able in a *Scientific* way to Account for the Nature or Manner of it. For otherwise, besides that we shall bar all the things of another World from being Objects of Revelation, since of these we have no Sight, what deference do we pay to God more than Man, if either we suppose that he cannot reveal Truths to us which we cannot comprehend, or if we will not receive them if he does? We are therefore to believe, tho' in this Sense we do not See, unless we will suppose our selves to see every thing, and so make our own Understandings the *Measure* of all Truth. This I doubt will fall heavy upon the *Socinians* and *Libertines* of the Age, who will allow no Mysteries in Religion, demand a Philosophic Reason for every thing, and will believe nothing but whose Bottom they can sound and Fathom. But these Men anticipate that Vision in this World which is to be the Privilege of the next, and in the mean time forget that they (as well as other Men) are to walk here by Faith, and not by Sight. Such intemperate Curiosity,

riosity, and (as I may call it) *Hardiness* of Understanding that rudely dashes on upon a Mystery, without any Reverence to its awful Retirements, has done near as much Mischief to Christianity as utter *Infidelity* it self. However I am sure it is every whit as contrary to its Genius and Spirit. For that requires us to captivate our Reason to the Obedience of Faith, but these Men captivate Faith to the Obedience of their Reason, and thereby become not only ill Christians, but Enemies to the Christian Religion. For (as Monsieur *Abbadie* to this purpose well observes) the Christian Faith has two Sorts of Enemies, the *Infidels* who attack it on that side whereon it shines, and the *Presumptuous* who shew no respect to its Sacred Obscurity. Those who deny all, and those who would know all. And 'tis hard to tell which of these Enemies are the worst, though in one respect we may justly apprehend more danger from the latter, since the *Infidels* are without the Church, whereas the *Socinians* (I'm afraid) begin to have a Party within it.

AGAIN, Thirdly and Lastly, Since our Present State in reference to the Life to come is to Walk by Faith not by Sight, this ought to make us very modest and reserv'd in prying into the Secrets of a future World, and will serve greatly to condemn the Conduct of those who either have recourse to Spirits for Intelligence, or who employ their Study about the Philosophy of the separate State, about Angels and Immortal Substances, intruding into those things which they have not seen, nor can see; vainly puffed up ('tis to be fear'd)

fear'd) by their *Fleshy Mind*. We ought rather to apply our selves to the great and Necessary Duties of Christian Life, and to the Study of such Practical Truths as have a tendency to promote it, as things that are better suited and proportion'd to the present Capacity of our Minds, and that are withal more necessary to be known, and wherein consists the whole Duty of Man. In one word therefore, let us take care to Believe and live well here, and be contented to See and Know Hereafter.

Now to God the Father, &c.

THE
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A
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
Charity to the Poor.

I JOHN 3. 17.

*But who so bath this World's Good,
and seeth his Brother bath need, and
shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion
from him, how dwelleth the Love
of God in him?*



HERE are some particular Duties that concern only some certain States and Orders of Men, and there are others that are common to all Men. And of those that are Common there are some that may lie *equally* upon Men, and others that lie *unequally*, obliging some in a greater Measure than they do others. Of this latter Kind is the Duty implied in the Text. It is a Duty of a *Common, but Unequal Obligation*. There needs no special Authority or Commission for the Exercise of it, as in the Duties of the first Rank, suppose of a *Magistrate or a Minister, a natural Power or Ability*.

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ty will be sufficient, which makes it no particular, but a common Duty. But then though all Men are obliged to it that have so much as a natural Possibility or Power, yet some are more so than others, because they have a greater Power; which makes it tho' a common, yet an unequally obliging Duty. For tho' Charity, as it signifies good Will to our Neighbour, be a Duty of an equal as well as universal Obligation, because here every one is, or by the Grace of God may be equally able (to be *able* here being no more than to be *willing*) yet as 'tis taken for that particular instance of it which is express'd by Acts of Bounty and Liberality, commonly distinguish'd by the Name of *Alms-giving*, so 'tis more peculiarly the Duty of the *Rich* and the *Wealthy*, who are in a more eminent manner obliged, because better able to perform it. And who if they do not, must not pretend either to the Practice or to the Rewards of Religion, must neither set up for Lovers of God, nor expect to be the Objects of his Love and Favour. Those indeed that are truly *Charitable* we may well presume to be *Religious*, to be Lovers of God, as well as Lovers of Men, and to have a Stock of Devotion as well as of Pity and Goodness. *But who so hath this World's Good, and seeth his Brother hath need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?*

THE Words lie in a Form obviously resolvable into this single Proposition, *That he that is well able and can conveniently relieve the Poor in their Necessities, and will not, has not the Love of God dwelling in him.* Thus in gross. But because this latter Clause (*How dwelleth the Love of God in him*) may admit of more

more Senses than one, and because upon the right and full understanding of it at all turns, it may be convenient before we go any further to explain and settle the Signification of this Fundamental Phrase, that so the Subject of the following Discourse may be the more distinct, and we may have a clearer *White* for our *Mark*.

THE gteat Question here is, What we are here to understand by the Love of God. And were one to consider the Words only as they stand singly and absolutely, without relation to the Context, this would be no Question neither. For then I think by the Love of God we should upon the first hearing of the Words apprehend either that Love whereby a Man loves God, taking the Term (God) *Objectively*, or that Love whereby he is belov'd of him, taking the same Term *Subjectively*, or perhaps Both. And thus when St. John says, *How dwells the Love of God in him?* it would signify as much to us as if he had said, *How can it be imagin'd that either he should love God, or that God should love him?* Thus I say the Words seem to sound, and thus I believe they are commonly taken.

Now not to exclude either of these Senses because they are both of them true, and of Consequence to be spoken to, I think however that there may be yet another Sense no less true in it self, and (if we regard the Context) more likely to be intended by St. John; and that is by the Love of God here to understand that kind of Compassion, or a Counterpart of that Love and Goodness which the Lord Jesus express'd towards us in dying for us, and which in Imitation of his Example he requires from us towards one another.

So

So that the Love of God in this Sense will be the same with the Love of Men, that is, Christian Charity, and *how dwells the Love of God in him*, will be as much as how is there such a Love in him as was in God, and as he requires to be in us; which tho' indeed the Love of Men, is yet here called the Love of God, because so highly exemplify'd by God in dying for the World.

THAT this is the stricter and more immediate Sense of the Words we can no longer doubt, if we regard the Occasion that introduces them. St. John in the Verse before had commended the Excellency of the Love of God from that signal Testimony of it in his laying down his Life for us, and had withal concluded thence that we ought in imitation of so Divine a Pattern to do the like for one another in proportionable Cases. *Hereby (says he) perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his Life for us, and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.* Then it follows by way of Contrariety, *But who so hath this World's Good, &c.* As much as to say, if God has express'd so much Love to us, as to lay down his Life for us, and we in Conformity to his Example ought also to lay down ours for the Brethren, how short then of what God has done and we ought to do is the Practice of those, who will not part with some of their *Abundance* to relieve their poor Brethren in their *Necessities*! We ought if occasion be to part with our very *Lives*, but if we will not so much as part with some of our *Money*, if we will not open our Purses for them for whom the Son of God was pleased to open his Side, nor feed them with a little Bread, for whose Life and Nourishment he was content to give

give his Body and Blood, how can it be once thought that the least Spark of that Divine Fire which glow'd so strongly in our Saviour's Breast dwells in ours, that we have any thing of that Love for one another that he had for us all ; and how plain and unquestionable is it that we have not ! How do we imitate God, or act by that Spirit of Goodness and Kindness by which he became Incarnate and suffer'd Death for us ! And thus *how dwelleth the Love of God in us !*

BUT besides the Chain of the Context, there is a Parallel Text in St. John that will further confirm our Interpretation of this. As he says here, that neglecting the needs of our Brethren is an Argument that we have not the Love of God dwelling in us, so elsewhere he says, Joh. 4. 12. that *if we do love one another God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us.* *His Love*, that is, that same Love of God towards Men, which moved him to send his Son to be a Propitiation for their Sins, as appears from what goes before. Which Love of his is *Copied out, Imitated and Perfected* by us when we are kind and loving to our Fellow Creatures, even as the Sufferings of Christ are said to be *Perfected* by us, when we suffer after his Example, as Dr. Hammond expresses it in his Paraphrase upon that Text. And so on the contrary, when we do not shew this Brotherly Kindness, then this Love of God to Mankind is not copied out, imitated or perfected by us, and so may be said not to *dwell* in us, as in the Words before us.

THIS may serve to shew the Love of God in the Text to be at least truly if not principally meant

meant of *Charity*, that Transcendent *Charity* which was so Sensibly and Convincingly Express'd in the Death and Passion of Christ for us. So that we have now gain'd another Sense to be add'd to the other Two (for I do not intend to exclude them neither) and all put together will amount to thus much, that the Man of sufficient Ability, but no Will to Relieve the Poor, has neither *Charity* nor *Good Will* to Men dwelling in him, nor any true Love to God, nor is he belov'd by him. There are therefore **Three Things** here supposed to be said of the Person of this Character, and so our First General Proposition more distinctly unfolded resolves into these **Three**.

FIRST, *That our Rich Miser that has Ability enough, but no Heart to Relieve the Poor, has no true Christian Charity dwelling in him.*

SECONDLY, *That he has no true Love to God.*

THIRDLY, *That neither is he belov'd by him.*

THESE are the Propositions I intend to speak to from the Words, but before I do so, there are some qualifying Expressions in the Text that I must take Notice of for the Clearer handling of them. Whereof the First is,

Whoso hath this World's Good, that is, I suppose, he who by the good Providence and favourable Indulgence of God is in full and plentiful Circumstances, who abounds and overflows with Worldly Blessings, in one Word, the *Rich Man*. But because (*Rich*) is a Term of some uncertainty, and accordingly liable to Mistake, which would be here of bad Consequence where there is so much depending upon it, this being

one of the *Cardinal Expressions* of the Text upon which the great Stress and Weight of it rests, I think it Necessary briefly to state the Notion of Riches, and to shew who is properly to be understood by a *Rich Man*.

A Name which we no sooner hear but there Commonly rises in our Minds an Idea of one that has a large Estate and Great Possessions either in Money, Land, or some other Valuable Property. *Great*, not relatively Consider'd or with Proportion to the Condition of the Owner (whose Circumstances are seldom taken into the Account) but Absolutely regarded, or compared with the Possessions of other Men. We don't use to trouble our selves with the Consideration of the Man's Circumstances, 'tis sufficient that he has such a great Estate to call him a Rich Man, and we look no further. Now though Greatness of Estate may make a Rich Man in a *Natural Sense*, yet certainly in a *Moral Estimation* to be Rich is a *Relative* thing, and signifies not the having that which is a great deal in it self, but which is so to him that has it, with respect to his Condition, Circumstances and Occasions. And he is truly the Rich Man, not that *has* a great deal, but that can *spare* a great deal; and he is Richest, not that has simply and absolutely *Most*, but that has most to *Spare*; not that has the greatest *Estate*, but the greatest *Superfluity*. For we'll suppose two Men, one that has indeed a great Estate, but at the same time, either by reason of his Quality or some Eminent Station that he holds either in the Church or State, such great Occasions, that he can Save little or nothing out of it, having but just enough to bear out his Necessary

Part.

Part. Another again that has a far less Estate, but who withal has by far Fewer Occasions, Lives Privately and within himself, and so can save a great deal out of his little. The Question is which of these is the Richer Man. The First no doubt Popularly speaking and in a Natural Sense, as having the greatest Estate; but sure Morally speaking the Latter, because he has more in Proportion to his Occasions than the other has in Proportion to his, that is, he has more to *him* though not Absolutely so much, and so has a greater Superfluity, though a less Income. This I take Notice of, that those who are Rich only in the Second Sense may not think themselves un-concerned in what St. John says of him that *has this World's Good*, merely because they are not Men of great Estates, though otherwise Never so a-bounding with regard to their more private Circumstances, and less craving Occasions. So much for the first qualifying Expression. The Next is,

And seeth his Brother hath need ; This is well added because it meets with the Pretence that is commonly pleaded by Uncharitable Men. They pretend Ignorance of their Neighbour's Necessities, and when the distressed Supplicants would make them better Known, they think it enough to discharge themselves of their troublesome Guests and their Duty too, to tell them, that the World is full of Cheats, and that there are a great many Counterfeits about the Country, and they have no Assurance but that they are of that Number, and therefore they think it neither Prudent nor Charitable to give at such Uncertainties. And I do not deny but that in some Cases this may be true, though withal I question not but that too

many Cover over their real Covetousness and Hard-heartedness with this Veil of pretended Prudence. However to obviate all Shifts and Excuses St. John takes away this old Refuge, by supposing his Rich Man whom he afterwards Charges with Uncharity for not relieving his Necessitous Brother, to see and be sufficiently satisfy'd and assured that he *is in need*. After which it follows,

And shutteth up his Bowels of Campassion from him, that is, that stifles those common Movements of Pity, those tender Relentings, those inward Stirrings of Humanity which arise even in the most Cruel and Insensible Breasts, and would even Mechanically incline them to Acts of Mercy and Charity, if they would but stand Neuter, and leave Nature to her own Workings. But he will not, but strives against them, fortifies his yielding Spirit, and industriously hardens himself both against his own Compassion and the Miseries of the Poor Supplicant, is deaf to his Complaints, blind to the Marks of his Poverty, and *Shuts first his Heart, then his Purse, and then his Door* against him.

BUT if this be his *Behaviour*, what is his *Religion*, or where is it, or to what purpose serves it, or what is himself or others the better for it, or how shall we believe he has any, and particularly let me ask him St. John's Question, *How dwelleth the Love of God in him?*

AND First, How dwelleth the Love of God in him, according to the First Sense of the Love of God, as it denotes true Christian Charity! Can such a one pretend to any thing of this? 'Tis most sure that he justly cannot, and unless

his

his Forehead be as hard as his Heart, sure he will not. But if he does, let him but Consider what the *Nature* and what the *Measure* of Charity is. As for the *Nature* of Charity, there is Nothing more plain and undisputed, since all the World understands by it such a Habit or Temper of Mind as disposes a Man to wish well and do well to all his Fellow Creatures according to their several Needs, and his own Opportunities. Wherein it is at once distinguish'd from, and advanc'd above the *Vertue* of *Justice*, which is concern'd no further than to render Men what they have a Civil Right to, and can legally Claim as their Due. Whereas by Charity we mean something more than paying Reckonings, and striking off Scores. 'Tis not only to do Men Right, but to do them Good, not only that which the Law requires, but which Reason dictates, not only what they can Challenge, but what they Need. This is the *Nature* of Charity. Now as for the *Measure* of it I find the Scripture makes it two-fold. *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy Self*; *Lev. 19. 18.* This is the *Measure* of the old Law. To which our Saviour adds a New one, *Joh. 13. 34.* *A new Commandment give I unto you that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* So then we are to love one another, First, as we love our selves, that is with the same kind Affection and Benevolence, and in all the Reality, Cordialness, Sincerity and Constancy of it, having a Fellow-Sense with our Brethren in every thing, rejoicing in their Happiness, and Sympathizing with them in their Afflictions, and not only doing no more *against* them than we would be willing they should do against us, but also be-

ing ready to do as much for them, as we would be willing they should do for us. Secondly, As Christ Jesus lov'd us all, that is, with that Noble and Generous, disinterested and unselfish kind of Love which our Tender Redeemer had, when for us Men, and for our Salvation he came down from Heaven and Suffer'd upon Earth, and did such things for us as Angels Consider with Wonder, and Devils with Envy, such as our Invention could never contrive, such as our Hope could never look for, and such as our Faith can even now hardly Believe, but is every now and then apt to break forth into the Language of the Surprized Virgin, *How can these things be!* Why thus also ought we to love one another, with the most Heroick and Divine Affection, so as to be ready to Sacrifice even our very Lives for the sake of our Brethren, as it is in the Verse before the Text, *Hereby perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his Life for us, and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.*

But now if this be Charity and the Measure of it, how Infinitely short does he come of it, and with what Face can he pretend to it, who has this World's Good, and sees his Brother in Need, and yet shuts up his Bowels of Compassion from him! For is this to be kindly Affected towards him, and to bear a hearty good Will to him? Is this to love him as *himself*, and to be as sensible of, and as Concern'd for his Interest as he is for his own? Do we use to serve our dear selves at this rate, or would we be so treated by others? No, the Man loves himself a little otherwise, it being only upon a Mistaken Sposition of Self-advantage that he thus uses his distressed Brother. But then I ask again, is this to love his

his Brother as *himself*? Is it, when he sets himself and his own supposed Interest so far before that of his Brother, as rather than break a round Sum, or diminish never so little from a Plentiful Store (though it be like taking a Drop out of the Ocean) rather than put himself to the least inconvenience, though it be no more than even the very Trouble of Giving, (for that also I have Known to be the Case) to let a poor destitute Creature, and perhaps a Person of much greater Worth than himself, either languish and perish before his Eyes, or sigh on in a Life of such Extremity as is worse than Death ! If this be to *have* Charity, what is it to be *without* it, and who but a Mere *Devil* can possibly want it ? I say a Mere Devil, for I can see nothing more but a Spirit of Malice, and taking delight in the Miseries of Men that can be added to this most wretched indifferency concerning their Welfare, which certainly is as far remov'd from true Charity, as it is from that Love which every one bears to himself. And yet this is all that Men of this Complexion have to say for themselves, and 'tis the very Plea they commonly make. They say, and they very Solemnly thank God for it, that they are in Charity with all the World, meaning that they bear no Body any *Malice* or *Ill Will*. And many an Old Trembling Miser has Reposed himself upon this sorry Crutch, and very gravely Comforted himself with this Formal Protestation upon his Dying Bed, and so gone to the Devil with good Satisfaction. But this is to prove one's Self a good Christian because one is not a Devil. For when all's done, that's the best that can be said of such a Wretch, *He is not a Devil*; but to allow

him to be a good Man would be too great a Reproach to Human Nature.

MUCH less then can he pretend to the Charities of a *Suffering God*, who has not so much as the Compassions of a good-Natur'd Man. The Charity of Christ went so far as to lay down his Life for us, and (as little as we think of it) that's the Charity which by Virtue of his New Commandment we owe one another, even to lay down our Lives for our Brethren, when there is a due Occasion for so dear a Sacrifice. But can it be expected that he should ever rise up to that Noble and Divine Pitch of Charity, that has not a Heart so much as to give an *Alms*? What! will that Man ever part with his *Life*, the Foundation of all his Temporal Enjoyments, that will not so much as part with a little *Money* for the Relief of those whose Wants he sees and knows, but neither Feels nor Considers? Will he ever Sacrifice *himself* for his Brother, after the Example of our Generous Lord, that will not do so much, I will not say, as miss a Meal, or part with a Convenience for his Sake, for that would imply some Trouble in it, but even to spare him some of his Overflowings, some of his *Burthen*, something of that Abundance which breaks his Sleep, distracts his Head, and is even a trouble to him to Possess? No certainly, he that loves *Self* so much even in its *Excrements* and Superfluities, will be sure to love it too well in its Fund and Bottom (*Life*) ever to be guilty of so Expensive a Charity. But where then is that Excellent Spirit of Goodness, Love and Divine *Philanthropy* which was in the Incarnate Word, the Suffering, Bleeding, Dying Redeemer of the World? Not in

in our Covetous Wretch to be sure, who refusing to Communicate a little of his Worldly Substance to those for whom our Lord Jesus Sacrific'd his Life, shews himself to be at the furthest distance from the Temper and Practice of that Divine Lover, and that he has not the least Portion of his Excellent Spirit resting upon him. And indeed he may as well pretend to the Purity of an Angel, as to the Charity of a Christian. However perhaps he may make it up some other way, and particularly in the way of *Devotion* and *Religion*. But besides that this would signify nothing without Christian Charity, I shall now go on to shew,

SECONDLY, *That as he wants that, so he has no true Love to God neither.* This is the Common Retreat, and last Reserve of Covetous Rich Men. They are too Sensible of their want of Love to Men to make any great boasts on that side, and 'twould be to no purpose if they should, when their whole Behaviour is such a visible Proof of the Contrary. But then you shall have them pretend highly to the Love of God, and set up for Men of Extraordinary Devotion and Piety, for no other Reason that I can imagine but only because 'tis the Cheaper and less Expensive Service of the two. But not to Mind these Men of a saying in St. John which none are more concern'd in than themselves, *He that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* Joh. 4. 20. Nor that Acts of Charity are also Acts of Religion, according to those two remarkable places of Scripture, *to do good and to Communicate forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleas'd,* Heb. 13. 16. and *Pure Religion and Undefined,*

Undefiled, &c. Jam. 1. 27. and that therefore 'tis to no purpose to talk of being Religious without them ; nor yet of that Expression of our Saviour, Mat. 25. 45. *In as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me ;* a Passage which will hereafter Eternally stop the Mouths of all those pretended Votaries to the Person of Christ, who yet shew no regard to his poor Members, and therefore ought as much to silence them Now ; I say not to argue with them upon these Measures which yet are sufficient to Cast and Condemn them, I would only know of them what they mean by the Love of God, or with what sort of Love it is that they Love him. Not I presume with Love of *Benevolence* ; For since they will not bestow it upon their Fellow-Creatures, whose Wants and Miseries render'd them but too proper Objects of it, sure they will not pretend to bestow it upon the Blessed God, whose Perfect and Unincreasable Happiness makes him utterly incapable of, because it sets him Infinitely above such a Love. By the Love of God therefore they must mean (if they understand either Sense or themselves) Love of *Desire* ; That they seek Union with God as their true and Sovereign Good, as their End and Beatific Object, and that their general Desire of Happiness is fix'd and lodg'd in him as the real Cause of it. But now if they do indeed thus Love God, then since God has so abundantly promised not only many great Rewards, but even *Himself* as the great Reward to those that Consider and Relieve the Necessities of the Poor, how comes it to pass that when they Know their Wants, and are well able to Relieve them, yet they will not ? Do not these Men

Men plainly prefer their Money before the Enjoyment of God, whom they would rather lose for ever, than be for the Present a little the *Poorer* for his Sake! And is this to Love God, to Love him as God, with a Love Worthy of him, or that shall be thought Worthy to enjoy him, or indeed to receive the least Reward from him, I say is it to Love God, to value him at such a Rate, to Postpone him so far to the things of the World as to be unwilling to lay out a little Money for so vast a Purchase, to be at a little Charge to have the Eternal Enjoyment of so Sovereign a good? If this be to Love God, then *Judas* loved Christ when he held the Scale so uneven between him and the World as to let him be outweigh'd by Thirty Pieces of Silver. But these Men I suppose will not say that *Judas* was a true Lover of Christ, and with what Modesty then can they assume the Title of Lovers of God, whom they equally *undervalue*, though for want of Opportunity and Capacity they do not equally *Betray*? But we need not be further nice upon the Matter, 'tis visible to the Eye without *Measuring* it, that the Religion of these Men does not rise one jot higher than their Charity, and tho' they make greater Pretences to the Love of God than to the Love of Men, 'tis plain they love one no better than the other, and as plain that they love their Money better than both, which it seems they would much rather keep than either Relieve the Poor, or enjoy their Maker. And how then dwelleth the *Love of God* in them? 'Tis indeed almost enough to make a Man Sick of Religion to hear such Men pretend to it. Talk of Loving God? Their Money they mean, for they love nothing

nothing else that I know of, and that they *Idolize*, Sacrificing their Affections to it here, and their Souls to it for an *Eternal Hereafter*. For this it will come to, and this will be the Conclusion of him who has this World's Good, and sees his Brother has Need, and shuts up his Bowels of Compassion from him. Which brings me to Consider that as such a One has no true Christian Charity dwelling in him, nor any true Love to God, so neither,

THIRDLY, *Is he Beloved by him.* Here me-thinks I might be Excused all further Trouble upon this Part, even in the Judgment of our Covetous Rich Man himself, who however he may **Usurp** the Character of a *Lover* of God when he wants Charity to his Brother, yet one would think should never abuse himself with a Conceit of being the *Object* of God's Love and Favour when he wants both the Former. For is it Conceivable that God should Love him that has neither Charity to Men, his Fellow Creatures, nor Love to Himself, his Creator? Can God possibly Love a Creature so Irregular in his Affections, so degenerate even from himself, so far alienated from the Divine Life, so wholly subdued to that of Sense, so inamour'd of a little glittering Clay, and so all over devoted to the World as to make a God of it, and serve it with that int'reness of Zeal and Affection which He that is so can only Challenge? That is, in short, can God Love an *Idolater*? For such the Apostle tells us every Covetous Man is. But besides, can we suppose it possible that God (as much Love as he is) should love a Creature so utterly unlike himself, and who is of a Nature so little resembling his own?

What,

What, can God, who is such a Good, Bountiful, Self-Communicative, Self-diffusive, universalized Being, that out of Love Created a World, and out of greater love Redeem'd it, even at the Price of his Son's Blood, I say can such a Noble Generous Being as this, love one that is of the quite opposite Character, that is altogether as Strait, Contracted, Selfish and Illiberal; and that is so far from laying down his Life for his Brother's Good, that he will not so much as Sacrifice some of his Superfluous Dirt, (not to say the pleasure of a Meal or a Bottle) to his greatest Extremity? And is it possible for God to have any Love or Kindness for such a Wretch as this? It would be in vain for such a one to have recourse to the Infinite Goodness and Love of God, for the more loving God is, the less lovely will such a Creature appear to him, because the more *unlike* him, and consequently the less Worthy of his Love. Reason therefore will Warrant us to Conclude that he shall not have it, and so will Scripture too, which in express Terms declares that God hates the Covetous; For so the Psalmist, *Psal. 10. 3. The Wicked boasts of his Heart's desire, and blesseth the Covetous whom the Lord abhors.* We may therefore put St. John's Question concerning such a one in this last Sense as well as in the two former, *How dwelleth the Love of God in him?*

But if the Love of God does not dwell in him that does not impart of what is his own, what shall we then say of those who wrongfully invade or detain what belongs to others! Those particularly who defraud poor Labourers of their Hire, who oppres and grind the Poor instead of relieving

relieving them, and above all those who Corrupt and Abuse Publick Benefactions and Places of Hereditary Charity, such as *Hospitals* and *Alms-Houses*—. I say what shall we say of those Birds of Prey which turn these Publick Benefactions into private Advantages, and raise ample Preferments for themselves out of a Common Charity. Truly I know not what to say of them better than what St. Jude says of another sort of Wicked Men, that *they are Spots in our Feasts of Charity, feeding themselves without Fear*, and I can hardly forbear going on with the rest of the Character.

But to return to our Rich Covetous Men, I think after all this I need not go to prove to them that Alms-giving is a Duty particularly incumbent upon them, since without it they have neither Christian Charity, nor any true Love to God, nor are beloved by him. For do not these Considerations sufficiently bind it upon them, both in point of Conscience, and in point of Interest too? But where are the Rich Men that have a due Sense of their Obligations in this Matter? I must needs say that though they are the most *Able*, and so the most *Obliged*, yet they are the least *Willing*, and that generally speaking they do the least Good of any sort of Men in the World. And they have got a Morality among them suitable to their Practice. They generally think that if they are not of the Number of those I last spoke of, if they do not wrong any Body, but are Just in their Dealings, and pay every one their own, 'tis at their Liberty whether they will do any Works of Mercy and Charity or not, and that they may make as much of themselves, and

as little of others as they please. But Besides that by the Tenor of this whole Discourse it appears that they have not this Liberty, let me further tell them, that there is not that difference between *Charity* and *Justice* that they imagine. There is indeed this difference between them, that the Object of my Justice has a Right to demand, as well as I an Obligation to do, whereas the Object of my Charity has no such Right. But then let me tell those that plead this, that though this makes a great Difference in a Court of Justice, yet it makes none at all in the Court of Conscience, they being as much bound by the Laws of Christ to do acts of Charity as acts of Justice. The Obligation is the same on their side, though the Right be not the same on the other side, which is a Difference that Concerns the *Object* of Charity only, and not the *Bestower* of it, who gets nothing by the Distinction.

FOR after all I would fain know whether Acts of Charity are not as much commanded by the Religion of Christ, and made as Necessary to Salvation as Acts of Justice! And if they are, what does it signify that they cannot be Claim'd as a Right by those to whom they are due, nor Extorted by *Forms of Law*? Are they the less obliging in *Conscience*? Surely No. And how then those who make Conscience of being Just, and would by no means play the Knave, should yet satisfie themselves in living so wholly to themselves, and doing no good to those whose Needs and whose Prayers too bespeak their Charity, is a Mystery every one has not Head enough to Comprehend.

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But why do I reason with Men who want not so much to be Discours'd, as to be Awaken'd? and to this purpose I would only desire them to consider with me the Parable of the Rich Man in the Gospel, (*Luke 16.19.*) which if well minded, is enough to make all the Rich Misers upon Earth to Tremble. *There was a certain Rich Man,* &c. says the Text. But it does not say that he was inrich'd by the Goods of others; he is not charged with Injustice, or Oppression, or Extortion, or Adultery, nor with any other sort of Debauchery, no not so much as with any Intemperance in the use of his good things, as far as the Health and good State of his Body was concern'd. No, 'tis only said of him, *That he was cloathed in Purple and fine Linnen, and fared sumptuously every Day,* and that he suffered poor *Lazarus* to lie unregarded at his Gate. He it seems was one of those good honest Men (as they call them) that liv'd well, and kept a good Table, and were kind to their Friends, (that is, to those who don't need it) and to themselves, and that's all. He was (for ought that appears to the contrary) harmless and inoffensive, did no body any hurt, but would eat and drink well, live soft and warm, and wear fine Cloaths, and (let the World go how it would) be sure to take care of one, but concerned himself no further, and never thought of doing any good, or of communicating, even out of his Superfluity, to those who were in Distress. This is his Character, and the worst of it, and yet the next News that we hear of him is, that he is in Hell and in Torment. And is this the end of a Man, otherwise Just and Innocent, merely because he was wanting in Works of Charity?

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What then do our rich Misers think will become of them? And how can they chuse but conclude from hence that 'tis expected they should do good with what they have, as well as forbear doing hurt, and that if they are not *Charitable*, they may go to Hell with all their *Justice* and *Sobriety*?

Now is any Charity sufficient. They ought not only to give to the Poor, but to give *liberally*, and as the Apostle says, 1 Tim. 6. 18. to be *rich in good Works*, or else also *how dwells the Love of God in them*? For who should be liberal and open-handed if not they to whom Heaven has been so? And for what end has God given them such *Plenty*, but that they should do good with it, and be helpful to those who are in hard Circumstances, in Proportion to their Ability? Rich Men are under a great Mistake here also. They think if they do but now and then give an Alms at their Doors, and with a little Money or a Meals Meat relieve a present actual Want, they have done a notable piece of Charity, and made God their Debtor. And perhaps he might be so to another of less Ability, but sure not to them, who as they have abundance, so they ought to abound in their Alms accordingly; not only satisfy a present Want, but put Men into a Condition of *not wanting*. Not that these Measures are to be used at a Venture, and to all Comers, but with Choice and Discretion, and where they meet with proper Objets. And such a good Man that had much Wealth would diligently seek out for, first among his poor Relations, if he has any such, then among his Friends and Neighbours, and then among those of the best Merit and Cha-

racter abroad, as far as his Sphere would well extend: And where-ever he found a due Object for his Charity (such as a decay'd Gentleman suppose, or a poor House-keeper with an honest Mind and laborious Hand contending against a hard Fortune) there he would be very bountiful and kind, either by giving him a large Sum, or (which indeed is a neater, and full as beneficial a way) by lending him Money without Interest, or by selling him a great Quantity of Goods at half the Value, or by over-rewarding his Labour, or by some other way which his well-disposed Heart would easily help his Head to contrive. Oh what a World of good might rich Men do, if they had any Goodness in them!

But I must mind them of one thing more, which is, that they ought to distribute their Charities not only liberally but *seasonably*. I mean not only in respect of those whose Necessities they relieve, by doing it quickly, and without importunity, and when it may do them the greatest Service, but also in respect of *themselves*. That they do good and distribute their Benevolence in the time of their Youth and Health, and during the following course of their Lives, when they have power otherwise to employ it, and not live miserably and like *Hogs* all their Lives long, and then think to compound for all by leaving a rich *Legacy* behind them, or founding an *Hospital* when they come to die. Thank them for nothing. They keep their Hands upon their Purses as long as they can, and when Death bids them deliver, and they can hold their dear Treasure no longer, then with great Formality they make a *Will*, and pretend to *give*. They bequeath their Goods to

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the Poor, just as they do their Souls to God, because they are going, and won't make any further Stay with them. But I fear such a Death-Bed Charity is too near a-kin to a Death-bed Repentance, to be either much valued, or much depended upon. No, if they will be charitable indeed, let them be so while they live, and afterwards die as charitably as they please.

AND now methinks the bare Pleasure and Satisfaction of doing Good, if the Men I'm speaking of had but a true Taste and Relish of it, should be a sufficient Motive to put them upon all this, tho' they had no regard to Duty and Conscience, or the Retributions of another World. But when they shall be further told what a mighty stress the Scripture every where lays upon this Duty of *Alms-giving*, which is so eminent a part of Charity that it has in a manner ingross'd the Name of it, what a Multitude of Sins it will cover, what a Figure it will make at the last Judgment (the great Inquest of which it seems is to be about it) and what large Rewards are promised to it in both Worlds, methinks instead of waiting to be ask'd, or patiently suffering a poor Petition, they themselves should turn Beggars, and Court the Poor, even in their own Language, for God's Sake, to receive their Alms, and to let them deposite some of their perishing Wealth in their Hands upon Earth, that they might receive for it in Exchange an incorruptible Treasure in Heaven. Who can hear those strange Words, *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me*: And, Prov. 19. 17. *He that hath pity upon the Poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given he will pay him again.* I

say who can hear such things as these, and see his Brother in want, and shut up his Bowels of Compassion from him, when he has this World's Good, and is well able to relieve him? Especially if he hear him plead in his dear Redeemer's Name that dy'd upon the Cross for us, that Name of Love and Wonder, that sweet and adorable Name that carries so many Mysteries of Goodness and Mercy in its sound, what Heart can then resist, what Hand can then with-hold! For however in other Cases it be too true what *Solomon* observes, that the Words of the Poor are not much regarded, yet certainly there is no Rhetorick so powerful, so commanding, as that of a Poor Man begging in the Name of *Jesus Christ*.

BUT I am sensible all this is but mere *Cant* to our rich Miser, who has a Heart that will serve him to hear a thousand Lectures about Charity without the least damage to his Pocket. For as for the Pleasure of doing Good he understands it Not, he has no Notion of the Matter, nor will the Spectacles wherewith he tells his Money, help him to see *Jesus Christ* in a Poor Man. And as for being rewarded in another World, and lending to God to be hereafter repaid with Interest, he is not for this *Spiritual Sort of Usury*, but looks upon what is lent to God as little better than a *Desperate Debt*. The plain Truth of it is he does not like his *Security*, but thinks a *Mortgage* is better.

AND what shall we do now with such *truly Miserable Wretches* as these, who do not believe enough of another World to do any good in this, or what shall we further say to them? They have more need to be pray'd for in our Churches among

mong the Sick, and distemper'd in Mind, than to be preach'd to; and to be commended to the Grace of God, than to the Discourses of Men. There then I leave them, to the Divine Mercy, and to the World's Pity, for sure they are in all Senses the most *Miserable* Creatures in it. In the mean while if there be any thing truly great and happy here below, 'tis he first that bears his Poverty contentedly, and he next that believes it generously. I end all with those pressing Words of the Apostle, *Charge them that are rich in this World that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches, but in the Living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. That they do Good, that they be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. Laying up in store for themselves a good Foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on Eternal Life, 1 Tim. 6, 17.* Which God of his Mercy grant us all for the Sake of Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit be all Honour and Glory for ever. Amen.

A

DISCOURSE CONCERNING

The Right Use of the World.

1 COR. 7. 31.

----- *And they that Use this World, as
not Abusing it.*



EXT to the Everlasting Punishments of the other World there is nothing so truly dreadful to a duly enlighten'd Spirit, as the passing Dangers of this, and that because these Dangers lead to those Punishments. When we hear of the Dangers of the World, we commonly think of those things which threaten either our *Lives* or our *Fortunes*, that tend either to remove us out of the World, or to make us poor and miserable in it. These appear to us as the only Dangers, and according as we are secure from these, so far we reckon our selves and our Condition *Safe*. And this Sentiment

Sentiment of our Heart (as it usually happens) is got into our Language. Thus we say of one that he is taken very dangerously ill, and of another that his House was seiz'd with a very dangerous Fire. Whereas in a true Estimation of things Health and Prosperity are the greater Dangers, and however it might sound to a popular and worldly Ear, an Angel would readily understand me, and so would a wise Man too, if I should say, such a one is very *dangerously well*, and of another, that he is very *dangerously rich and great*. We may and commonly do fright our selves with imaginary Terrors, but when all's done there is no Danger in the World like living in it, and having much of it, and did Men enter it at a mature Age, and with as much Thought and Reflection as they leave it, they would be more afraid to be born than they are to die.

St. Austin frequently compares the World to a *Sea*, and our Church alludes to the same Figure in the Office of Baptism, when she prays for the little Infant Voyager, *That he may so pass the Waves of this troublesome World as finally to come to the Land of Everlasting Life*. Here we have a Representation of the two Worlds under the lively Images of *Sea* and *Land*. That hereafter is *Land*, safe, stable and immovable, fit for a fix'd Dwelling and Abode, even that Eternal Rest which remains for the People of God, *Heb. 4. 9.* But at present all is *Sea*, and a troubled one too, a *Sea* in a *Storm*, rolling and working with a furious, unconstant and dangerous Motion, or rather whose *Calms* are worse than *Storms*. Some are but *Coasters* in this great *Sea*, like the first artless *Sailors* that steer'd their wary Course within *View*

of Land, and these are they of Private Life and little Fortune ; while other more venturous, but often less happy Mariners, Men of high Rank and publick Station, strike out more freely into the unfaithful Deep, committing their larger Vessels to the Winds and Floods. Which of these is safer is not easier to say than that all is full of Danger, there being not any part or Degree of Depth in this great Ocean which has not proved fatal to many a Shipwreck'd Passenger.

So very numerous and thick-laid are the Temptations of the World, that where-ever a Man sets his Foot he can hardly help treading upon a Gin or Snare, and so corrupt the very common Air, that to breathe is almost to draw in Infection. St. John tells us there is nothing in the World but the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, and all these are dangerous Temptations, which may make us the less wonder at what he says of it elsewhere, that *it lies all in Wickedness.* For how should it be otherwise in a World so full of, so altogether made up, and as it were *consisting* of Dangers, and where to set aside all others, that of *Common Conversation* alone is enough to corrupt the best complexion'd Soul among the Heirs of *Adam*. The ordinary Discourses of Men (even those which go for innocent) are nothing else but effusions of that Vanity, Pride and Concupiscence that lie deep in their Hearts, from the abundance of which their Mouths speak, and by this their evil Communication they corrupt good Manners. What Company shall a Man go into from which he will not come away worse than he went ? Men transfuse their Passions into their Discourses, and by them into

into their Hearers. They communicate their Vices at the same time, and in the same Vehicles, that they convey their Thoughts ; and infect one another, as other Diseased Persons do by their *Breath*.

UPON Consideration of these things some have thought it necessary to *Retire*, and not content with renouncing the Pomps and Vanities of the World in their Vow of Baptism, have added to it another, that of renouncing the World it self. They thought they could not live innocently in the World, and therefore were resolv'd to leave it ; as those who cannot enjoy their *Health* in the City withdraw into the Country. And indeed if we cannot avoid an *Evil* by separating the *Effect* from the *Cause*, we must then avoid the *Cause* it self : For there are but those two ways of declining any *Evil*. The latter way is that which is taken by the Votaries of Solitude, they avoid the *Cause*. But the Apostle here supposes the other Expedient, which is by separating the *Effect* from the *Cause*. For as bad as the World is there is no necessity either of not using it or of abusing it ; since the Abuse may be separated from the Use, and we may use the World without abusing it, as the Apostle intimates in the Words of the Text, — *And they that use this World, as not Abusing it.*

THE Apostle had been before Discoursing of certain particular States and Duties of Life, and comes now to something of more general Concernment, which is to read all Christians a Lecture of Caution and Indifferency in the Application of themselves to the things of this World. And perhaps it is the strictest, and runs the highest of

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any in the New Testament. *Brethren*, says he, *the time is short*, both that of the World it self, and that of our Abode in it, *it remaineth that both they that have Wives, be as tho' they had none; and they that weep, as tho' they wept not; and they that rejoice, as tho' they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as tho' they possessed not.* As much as to say, there is nothing considerable enough in so transient a State, where the Scenes open and shut so fast, to be very much lov'd or very much fear'd. Nothing worth being troubled much at, or rejoicing much for, or delighting much in. And therefore 'tis but just and decorous you should be very sparing and indifferent in the indulgency of your Passions, in your Love, and in your Grief, and in your Joy; and withal so moderate in your admissions to what you possess as if you had nothing to call your own. After an enumeration of which Particulars, he collects and winds up all into this general Conclusion, — *And they that use this World as not abusing it.*

They that use this World. 'Tis observable here that St. Paul does not oblige Men either to use the World, or not to use it. This is matter of mere Discretion, and accordingly wholly left to their Liberty. Only 'tis reasonable here that Men should be so just and true to themselves and their best Interests, as to act by the same Measures for their Souls as they do for their Bodies; and that therefore they would avoid a World that endangers their Innocency, as much as they would a Place that incommodes their Health. But every Man must be judge for himself when that is, and therefore must be left at Liberty whether

whether he will live and converse in the World or not, according as in his own Discretion, upon a serious deliberation of the matter, he shall judge most expedient. Men are not ty'd to live in the World, or to Cloyster themselves from it, the only point of Duty and Obligation upon them is, that they take care that this their Liberty prove not a Snare to them ; and that while they use the World, they do not abuse it. This therefore being the Duty of the Text, for the better Consideration and inforcement of it, I shall endeavour to shew,

1. *What it is to Abuse the World.*
2. *Upon what account it concerns us to beware of this Abuse.*

Now as to the First, By the Abuse of a thing, when we speak strictly, we mean the unlawful use of a thing, which therefore always includes the simple use of it. And accordingly, we cannot be said to *abuse* what we do not so much as *use*. But in a more large and popular Acceptation of the Word, we are then said to abuse a thing when we behave our selves any ways disorderly about it, whether it be by enjoying it as an End, when it ought only to be used as a Means, or by using it as a Means when it ought to be enjoyed as an End ; or lastly, by using it as a Means to an End that is not due.

THE World is not capable of being abused in the second way. God only can be thus abused ; and we do actually put this Abuse upon him whenever, instead of referring all things to him, we very preposterously refer him to other things ;

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as they do, who make use of Religion as an Instrument to serve the Ends of Secular Policy. As when a Man enters into Holy Orders only for the sake of Preferment, or goes to Church out of a pretence of Devotion, when his real Business is to stare upon a handsome Face, or make an Assignment. Thus we abuse *God*, by using him when we should enjoy him. The two other ways are the ways of abusing *Creatures*, when we either *enjoy* them, or *misuse* them; when we place our End in them, or pervert them to such Ends to which they have no Natural Ordination. I conceive then there may be these two general Ways of abusing the World.

1. *By making it an End.*
2. *By using it as a Means to a wrong End.*

FIRST, *By making it an End.* St. Austin has long since resolved all Immorality into these two Fundamental Disorders, The enjoying what we should use, and the using what we should enjoy. *Omnis Humana per-
versio est*, says he, *fruendis uti velle,
atq; utendis frui*; to which he should have added to make his Division compleat, the using what ought to be used to an ill End, and then he would have given us a full distribution of Immorality, to which all the Instances of it might be reduced. But we are at present concern'd only with the first of these, the *enjoying* what we should *use*; between which two St. Austin makes this *ibid.* difference, That we are said to enjoy that thing from which we take Pleasure, and to use that which we refer to that from whence

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we take Pleasure. And elsewhere,
To enjoy, says he, is to cleave with Love Tom. 3. p. 4.
to a Thing for it self, but to use is to refer
the Thing used to the obtaining what we Love. Where-
by it appears, that by enjoying, St. Austin means
the same as to make an *End* of a thing, and by
using to make a *Means* of it. And if what we
enjoy be really an End, and what we use be re-
ally a Means, then we are right and orderly in
our procedure ; but if we enjoy as an End what
ought only to be used as a Means, or used as a
means what ought to be enjoy'd as an End, then
we pervert and transpose the Nature and Order
of things, and are guilty of Disorder and Abuse.

AND thus it is when we make an End of the
World ; for then we make an End of that which
is no more than a Means, and *enjoy* that which
ought only to be *used*. For the World is not *our*
End, whatever it may be to Creatures below us.
We were not made for its Enjoyments, nor can we
be ever truly, or so much as in our own Opinion,
happy in them. I say in our own Opinion ; for
indeed, Men are ready enough to think one an-
other Happy, and to envy one another upon that
occasion, but no Man ever thought *himself* so.
'Tis true indeed, they think they *shall* be so, and
after the Disappointments and abuses of one Plea-
sure live on in Expectation of being more kindly
serv'd by another, so supporting themselves by
their Variety among their thin Entertainments,
as the sinking Bird holds up her weight by renew-
ing her Strokes in the yielding Air. But 'tis
most certain that all this is but mere Amusement.
They keep their Spirits from sinking by it, as the
Bird does her Body, and that's all. For when
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the future Delight comes to be present, and the promising Reversion falls into hand, it will be found as empty and vain as any of those tryed Nothings that went before. We may amuse our selves a while with Dreams and Fancies, but there is a Thirst in the Soul of Man which all the little Cisterns of the Creation can never quench, an Emptiness which they can never fill. God only can do that, and therefore he only is our End. He has made us for himself, and accordingly has given us Desires which none but himself can ever satisfy. And therefore if we make the World our End, 'tis plain that we set the Creature in the place of God, are guilty of the highest Idolatry, transgress the Laws of Truth, Order and Reason, mistake our Centre, deceive our selves, and abuse the *World*.

AND this those do, not only who are guilty of a full and down-right *acquiescence* in the *World*, reposing themselves upon it as upon a *Centre*, seeking Rest and Satisfaction in it, that have no Prospect beyond it, but bound their *Desires*, their *Hopes* and *Fears*, and their whole *Expectation* within its narrow *Limits*, but also who love and adhere to it for it self, and embrace it as a *true real Good*. For this is to make it an *End*, tho' not perhaps our *last and greatest End*. For nothing is lovely for it self, and upon its own inward *Goodness*, but what is an *End*; and therefore tho' we do not terminate in the *World* and set up our final rest in it, yet if we love it and cleave to it as a *true Good*, and for it self, we may be properly said to make an *End* of it, or in the Language of St. *Austin* to *enjoy* it, who by *enjoying*, as was observ'd before, means the very same thing,

thing, and who accordingly will not allow the World to be *enjoy'd* or *lov'd* as a true Good, but only to be *used*, or *referr'd* to that which is so. *Utendum est hoc Mundo*, says he, *non fruendum*. *This World is to be used*, Tom. 3. p. 5. not *enjoy'd*. Which how well it agrees with that Philosophy which says that the Creatures are so far from being able to content us, or make us happy, that they cannot so much as give us any one Pleasure by way of real Causes, but are, as to that, as so many dead empty Cyphers, and at the most serve but as Occasions of those grateful Sentiments which God, the true Source of all Happiness produces in us, and that therefore we are not to love or seek Union with them as our true Goods, or real Causes of our Happiness, but only to *use* them and serve our selves of them as the Conditions and Occasions of it, I shall leave to be consider'd by those who have leisure to enter into so nice a Meditation, while in the mean time I go on to give an Account of the other *Abuse* of the World, which is,

SECONDLY, *By using it as a Means to a wrong End*. We are supposed here not to make the World an End in any Sense, and indeed 'tis a very considerable Degree of Self-regulation for a Man to proceed thus far, not to *enjoy*, but only to *use* the World. But let not him that is arriv'd to this pitch think himself secure from all further danger, since it is not sufficient not to make an End of the World it self, unles we also use it to a *Right End*. We are to make a *Right Use* of it, as well as to stay and detain our selves in the bare *Use* of it; otherwise we shall not answer the Caution of the Text, so to *use* the World as not to *Abuse* it.

Now

Now the End for which the World ought to be used can be no other than that for which it was made; and if we would know what that was, we need only consider who it was that made it, since it is impossible that God, whose Perfections are Infinite, should act for any other End than himself, who is therefore the *final* as well as the *efficient* Cause of all his Works. And so the Scripture represents it, *Prov. 16.4. The Lord hath made all things for himself*, says the Wise Man. To which agrees that of St. Paul. *Rom. 11. 36. Of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be Glory for ever, Amen.* And again yet more expressly, *Col. 1. 16. All things were Created by him, and for him.* Since then all things are made for God, who is the End as well as Founder of the Creation, 'tis plain that all things ought to be referr'd to him, and consequently that if we would make a right Use of the World, we must use it for God and for his Glory. According as we are also exhorted by the same Apostle, *1. Cor. 10. 31. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, to do all to the Glory of God.* Wherein is also comprehended the Good and Welfare of Human Society, it being for the Glory of God that his Creatures, whom he made for the greatest and supremest Happiness, even the Enjoyment of himself, should be as prosperous and happy as may be, both in this Life and in the next. So then we are to use the World for the Honour and Glory of God, and for the true Interest and Welfare of Society, and accordingly not to use it for these, or for contrary ends, is to abuse it, as those do,

FIRST, Who instead of employing that Power, Interest, Authority, Station, Wealth or Grandeur which they have in the World for the Service of the

the Christian Church, and for the Incouragement of true Religion and Vertue, for the Advancement of God's Kingdom in the Hearts and Lives of Men, and the Righteousness thereof, Use all these for Contrary Purposes, to incourage Vice, or Vicious Principles, to pervert Men *from* a right Religion, or to Debauch them *in* it, and thereby do promote the Interest of the Devil's Kingdom, and Side with the Powers of Darkness against God. This is to arm the Creatures against the Creator, to fight against God with his own Forces, to Use the World directly to the dis-honour of him that made it, and is therefore in a very gross and heinous Manner to Abuse it. For Temporals are in order to Spirituals, and this present World ought to serve the Interests of the next, and as all Worldly Power and Grandeur is from God, so it ought to be used and laid out for God, and for the advancement of his Honour and Glory. And therefore all they who have any Considerable Share or Interest in the World, whether by way of Power, Honour, or Wealth, or whatever else may give them any Command or Influence over the Minds or Bodies of Men, ought to employ all these things for the advantage of God's Glory, for the Interests of his Kingdom, for the Promotion of his True Religion, and for the Edification of his Church, and if they do not they are Traitors to God, and Abuse both his *Kindness* and his *Gifts*. Which is done also,

SECONDLY, By those who Use the Good Things of the World, the Productions of Nature, the Fruits of the Earth, or any of God's Crea-

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tures in such a manner or degree as tends to their Prejudice. For the Creatures were intended for our Good, and therefore to use them for our hurt is to use them against their Natural Intention, which is to *Abuse* them. Now we may use them to our hurt two ways, either to the Hurt of our Souls, or to the Hurt of our Bodies. To the hurt of our Souls, when either we immediately discompose our Rational Powers themselves (as when by intemperate Eating or Drinking we disorder our Minds, and disturb our Understandings) or when we rob them of their proper and perfective Object, as when we gratify our selves in a lesser Pleasure, at the expence of a greater, and by an over-indulgence in the lower Goods of the Animal Life, unfit our selves for higher and more Rational Enjoyments. To the hurt of our Bodies, when we use any of God's Creatures in such a degree as to untune the Natural Harmony of their Constitution, and so prejudice our Health. Which will always be accompanied with a disorder of the Soul too, whose Operations depend too much upon the State of the Body not to suffer with it. This is grossly to abuse the World, and our selves too, because 'tis to pervert the good Creatures of God to an undue, nay to a contrary End, and in this consists the Formality of that Vice which we call *Intemperance*.

To give an Instance of this: *Wine* is a noble Production of Nature, and an excellent Gift of God, intended (as the *Psalmist* speaks) to make glad the Heart of Man, to cheer his sinking Spirits when oppressed with either Sickness, Melancholly, or Worl~~oy~~ Trouble, and to excite him when

when thus revived to praise the Bountiful Author of so rich a Blessing. And so far 'tis well, and as it should be. But when Men shall drink and swill till their Stomachs are heavy, and their Heads light, till they forget *themselves* as well as their Troubles, and exchange their Melancholly for Madness; when they shall make themselves sick with that which should comfort them, drown themselves in that which should refresh them, kill themselves with that which should revive them, and fall down under the Table with that which should raise them up: This is a most shameful, and a most ungrateful return to God for his Blessings, and such an intollerable Abuse of his Creatures, as deserves to be deprived even of the *use* of them.

NOR is the Practice of those to be excused, who, though they do not go to this Excess, do yet make a common Trade of drinking Wine, and that very liberally too, when they have no need of it. To see a Healthy, Sanguine, Vigorous Man who fares plentifully every Day, and with a keen Stomach sits at a full Table, whose Nature is already but too Luxuriant, and needs rather to be corrected and subdued than to be further cherished and heightned, to be *disciplined* rather than *feasted*: I say, to see such a one after his Day's Indulgence go ordinarily to the Tavern at Night, and there spend as much upon his already over-pamper'd Carcase as would serve to maintain a poor Family for a Week, is certainly a thing very odious and abominable, far remote from the Sobriety of a Man, or the Moderation of a Christian, and that tho' he be able to see his way Home, and can carry

P p p 2 , both

both himself and his *Burthen* safe to his Bed. For what tho' there be no down-right Drunkennes in the Case? Is there not however a great deal of Luxury and Self-Indulgence, and a shameful waste and destruction of God's Creatures? And is it fit that one Man should indulge himself so far in Extraordinaries, when thousands are ready to faint and languish for want of Necessaries? *Give strong drink* (says Solomon, *Prov. 31. 6.*) *unto him that is ready to perish, and Wine to those that be of heavy Hearts.* There indeed it would be well bestow'd, and a seasonable Relief, as it might be also sometimes to a Man that has either studied or labour'd hard all the Day. But for one that is Idle and Full, and whose Natural Fire is almost overlaid with Fuel, and needs rather *Air* and *Emptiness* than more Recruit, for such a one I say to be always quickning his Pulse and driving round his Blood with Hot, Spiritous Liquors, can I think by no means be reconciled to Christian Temperance; and for ought I know, a Man were better of the two be sometimes actually Drunk, and do the Natural Penance for it, than carry on such a Constant Trade of High Drinking, than be such a Grave, Sober and Deliberate Sot.

AGAIN Thirdly, those may be justly reckon'd to Abuse the World who employ it only to their own Use, and do no good with it. This is what those who have most of the World are Commonly most guilty of, and have most to answer for. Instead of enlarging their Hearts and their Hands with their Fortunes, the more they have of the World the more the World has of them, and the more Covetous and greedy they are. Upon which is founded that Admonition of the Psalmist, which

which at first View looks so like a Paradox, when *Riches increase, set not your Hearts upon them*, *Psal. 62.* implying that then is the great danger of it, and the time when Men usually do it, the true *Critical Season* of Covetousness. And to this agrees Experience. Those who when they had little of the World were Free and Generous, Kind-hearted and Open-handed, how Close and Stingy do they grow as the World thrives upon them, and they gather and swell in Substance! Especially if they grow *Old* at the same time. Then the World has a double hold of them, and they are by a Second Ingagement devoted to it. Then 'tis that they begin truly to understand the worth of Money, and the Art of keeping it. Then 'tis they retrench their Expences, and withdraw their wonted Benevolences, live more within themselves and are less Communicative to others, and like the *Setting Sun*, as it grows *Larger* and *Nearer* its *End*, give less and less Light and Warmth to the World.

AND they have (as it were by Consent) got a Notion among them which very much Humours this Selfish and Illiberal Practice. They reckon what they Legally Possess so much their own, and that they are such Absolute Masters of it, that they may dispose of it as they please. And if they shall think fit to do it wholly upon their own dear Selves, and let no body else be the better for it, what's that to any one, they make use of nothing but what is their *Own*, and is it not lawful to do what they please with *that*? But these Men for all their haste are Mistaken in their Accounts. For there is nothing in this World so much our own as that we should have an Abso-

lute and Unlimited Dominion over it. He that made the World has alone such a degree of Propriety in it. As for them, however they may be reckon'd *Proprietors* in respect of other Men, who cannot without Injustice invade their Rights, yet they are but *Stewards* and *Dispensators* in respect of God, who has only committed to them the good things of the World as a Trust, and will hereafter require of them an Account how they have managed it. So that a great Estate is only a great Trust, a Charge, a Talent, to be laid out for our Master's Use, that is, for the Interest and Advantage of our Brethren. And therefore they that do not make that use of it, but bestow it wholly upon themselves in a way of private Indulgence, are False to their Trust (how *true* soever they may be in their *Dealings*) and unfaithful to their Master, and Abuse as much of the World as they thus mis-employ. And what though Human Courts of Justice take no Cognisance of it, since the last General Tribunal most certainly will, where the great Question will be concerning the good they have done with the good things they have been intrusted with, and where tho' they have Committed no Injustices, nor robb'd upon the Highway, yet this alone will be enough to Cast and Condemn them, *I was an hungry, and ye gave me no Meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink, &c. Mat. 25. 42.*

But if to employ the World to our one private Use only, be to abuse it, what shall we say of those Miserable Wretches who neither spend it upon themselves nor upon others, but hoard it up in Bags and Chests, till their Riches are Corrupted and their Garments Moth-eaten, and their Gold

Gold and Silver Canker'd and devour'd with the Rust. Why certainly these Men would ingross the Beams of the Sun, Seal up the Fountain of Light, and inclose the Common Air if they could. For they do so by as much of the World as they can. But sure there cannot be a grosser Abuse of the World than this, thus to frustrate the Bounty of Nature, to stop the Circulation of her Blessings, and render her richest Fruits Idle and Insignificant. And if those that spend their Wealth in Riot and Luxury may be said with the *unjust Steward* to waste their Master's Goods, then those that thus safely hoard it up may be properly, even literally said with the *unprofitable Servant*, to bury their Talent in the Earth, and to hide their Lord's Money. And may justly with him expect to be *Cast into outer Darkness*, *Mat. 25. 30.*

THESE are they that abuse the World, and subject it to Vanity ; that enjoy it as if it were their God, and that use and dispose of it as if they themselves were the Gods and Lords of it. And 'tis under these, and such like, that the Creation groans and travails in pain, and from the Bondage of whose Corruption it longs to be delivered, and from serving as an Instrument of their Disorders to be translated into the glorious liberty of the Children of God, even that state of Happiness and Perfection, that re-establishment of Order, that great Renovation of Nature, that *Regeneration* of the Universe under the New Heavens and the New Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness, when the Creature shall be no more abused, nor the Creator any more dishonour'd, *Matth. 19. 28.* And thus you see what it is to abuse the World, and who they are that do it. And from

hence we may gather what it is to make a right use of the World, and who they are who so use the World as not to abuse it. They are they who do not rest, terminate and centre in the World, or make it their *End*, the boundary of their Desires, and the stay of their Minds; no, nor yet love or adhere to it as the true and real Good of their Souls, but use it only as a *Means* in order to that which is so, not affecting or desiring it for it self, as a *Beatific Object*, or a thing that has any real power over them, or that can bestow any degree of Happiness upon them, but only using and serving themselves of it for their conveniency and accommodation; in one word, that don't *enjoy* but only *use* the World. And that use it also to right and good Ends, such as the Glory of God, the Interest of Religion, their own good (that of their Bodies, and that of their Souls) and the good of their Brethren. That passing through the World like *hasty Travellers* are moderate and temperate in the use of the Creatures, neither disturbing their Bodies by them, nor injuring their Minds, either by disordering their Intellectual Faculties, or by unfitting them for higher, while they gratifie them with lower Enjoyments. That neither hoard up the good things of the World, nor yet employ them wholly to their own private use, but communicate and do good with them, according to the measure that they have of them, and so purchase *Heaven* by parting with a little *Earth*. This is to make a right use of the World, to use it according to its worth, and according to its true Natural Intention; and the contrary to this is to abuse it. I come now briefly to shew,

2. Upon what account it concerns us to beware of this Abuse. And among many others there are two very sensible and persuasive Reasons for this; the first of which may be taken from the Shortness and Transitoriness, the second from the Inconstancy and Instability of all Worldly Things. And they are both of them intimated by the Apostle in the place now under our Consideration. The First, when he says, *The time is short*: The Second, when he says, *The Fashion of this World passes away*.

AND 1. *The Time is short*. Both that of the World, and that of those that dwell in it. The World as fixed and as well-built as it seems for Age, and which the Heathen Philosophy thought *Eternal*, must and shall come to an End, and that End, in all likelihood, is not very far off. The Time it seems was short in the Apostle's Days, which accordingly in Scripture are often call'd the *last*; but it is much shorter now since so many Revolutions of the Sun are gone over our Heads, who by this certainly cannot want much of having finish'd his Rounds. And yet if the World were to last so much longer, what would it all be to Eternity? But if Time it self be so short, what then is the Time of Man? If the whole Circumference be so narrow, what then is that little *Arch* of the *Circle* which makes up the measure of our Vanity? What is it, I will not say to Eternity, but even to the World's Duration? And if Time it self be but as a swift *River* that quickly passes, sure we Mortals are but as the *Bubbles* in it, that hastily rise up and sink down one after another in our turns.

'Tis indeed but a little while since we came into the World, and in all likelihood much less that

that most of us have to continue in it ; and when a few more Suns have risen and gone down upon us we must all Die, and no longer enjoy the Light of the Heavens, nor the Fruits of the Earth, but take up our cold Lodging in one of its dark little Cells, and leave the rest of it, for as little a while, to other Tenants. In the mean time we must go and give an Account of our Stewardship, and be favourably or severely dealt with in the other World according as we have used this. But now if our stay in this World be so short, and our reckoning so near, does not this preach to us a Lecture of Moderation in the use of the Creatures, and very loudly Caution us against the Abuse of them ? For is it Wisdom to cleave to those things so immoderately which we must part with so quickly, to set our Hearts upon a World where we are only to take a turn or two, to lay out so many Hours upon our Pleasures and Diversions when we have but so few for our work, to spend our Morning in Luxury when our whole Day is so short, to Misuse any part of our Time when we have but so little in all, or to abuse the Creatures in any way of Intemperance, when we must so shortly answer for the Abuse of them ? And after all is it worth while to run the Hazard of being Miserable Everlastingly for such short Transient Indulgences, which Moulder away under our Hands, and even Perish in the very Using ? Were we here at our home, or in a place of long Abode and Settlement, there might be some invitation to Luxury and Indulgence, to plant Vineyards and be drunk with the Wine of them, but will we be intemperate upon the way, while we are in our Journey, and when we ride Post ? Or rather should we not

take

take this for our Motto, *Let your Moderation be known unto all Men, the Lord is at hand?* Yes certainly, the Nearness of the Other World ought to awe us into Sobriety, and keep us within the Bounds of it, for that little while we live in this. But this is not all, for,

SECONDLY, *The Fashion of this World passes away.* 'Tis not only to last for a short time, but even while it does last 'tis liable to many uncertainties, and suffers many Changes. The Seenes of this great Theatre are always shifting and turning, and the Stage is Never long without a New Figure. There are great Diversities of them, and the time for Action short, and therefore the Succession must be quick, that so they may all take their turns. The present Scene therefore never holds very long, but passes away, and another Figure appears, so that there is nothing fix'd and steddy. New Revolutions in Empires and Kingdoms, new Alterations in Families, new Accidents to particular Persons, no State or Condition of Life secure from Changes and Chances. He that appears in the Form and Habit of a King to Day, may put on that of a Beggar to Morrow. For 'tis all but *Acting of a part*, and the whole World is but one great Moveable Scene. Besides that we may now justly expect towards the latter End of this Great *Opera*, that the Scenes will thicken every Day more and more, and that the Fashion of this World will pass yet more swiftly away.

But now is this a World to be Fond of, or to Riot and Revel in? Is it not a Venture to Enjoy where there is so much Hazard of Losing, or to lean with great Force where the ground is so slippery, since the Fall must be in proportion to

to the Weight? Ought we not rather to tread lightly, and walk in Suspence, and be sure to keep our *Heads* in good Order, if 'twere only that they might look to our *Feet*? For we walk upon Ice, and our Vessel Floats upon a Wave. Dare we then make an ill Use of the Good Things of the World, when 'tis so uncertain how long we shall have even the very use of them? Dare we abuse our Power to Insolence, or our Greatness to Oppression, or our Wealth to Luxury, or our Health to Intemperance, or our Wit and Parts to Profaneness, or our Time to unfruitful and unprofitable Studies (for that's one great Abuse of our Time as well as Idleness) when 'tis so very uncertain when we shall be deprived of any, or all of these things? For they are all but *Scenes*, and those continually *passing*. It concerns us therefore to live rather in a constant Awe among so many Changes and Chances, and to use great Reserve and Moderation in our Commerce with the Creatures, still fearing the next *Scene*, lest it should be that of a Punishment for our Abuse of the Former.

LET therefore the Consideration of the Shortness and Instability of this present World so Govern us in the Use of all its little Vanishing Goods, that we may neither abuse them, nor our selves by them, but be so Moderate even in the most allow'd Enjoyments of the Creatures, that they may neither prove a Snare to us here, nor rise up in Judgment against us Hereafter. And I pray God (as our Church does) that we may all so pass through things *Temporal*, that we finally lose not the things *Eternal*. Amen.

Now to God the Father, &c.

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DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

The Successive Vanity of Human Life.

Eccl. 11. 8.

----- *All that cometh is Vanity.*



HIS is one of those *Melancholy*, but *Wholesome* Considerations wherewith the Wise Preacher qualifies and allays the Joy and Festivity of a Long and Prosperous Life ; the Pride and Luxuriancy of which he Tempers with a double Reflection ; One taken from the Consideration of *Death*, and the other from the Successive *Vanity* of *Human Life*. *But if a Man live many Years* (says he) *and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the Days of Darkness, for they shall be many.* As much as to say, 'tis not very likely that a Man should live many Years, considering the Niceness and Delicacy of his Bodily Frame, the Variety of Diseases and other Accidents he is Subject to, and the very small Number of those that attain to any considerable Age, in Comparison of those Multitudes

Multitudes who drop away before they come to any Ripereness, like untimely Fruit, whom either some inward Decay, or the Force of Violent Winds loosens or Snatches from the Tree. But suppose a Man by the strength of his Seminal Principles and a right Conjunction of other Accidents should live many Years, yet 'tis not at all likely he should rejoice in them all, 'tis not indeed likely that a very Long Life should be also a very Happy one, at least that it should be Happy throughout, in every Stage and Period of it. We usually say indeed a Short Life and a Merry, and Fair Weather may last for a little Season, but 'tis not probable that so long a Day should be without a Cloud to over-cast its Light, or a Storm to ruffle its Stillness, but should Shine on Clear and Calm to the very last. For besides that Human Life is liable to variety of Casualties, and there are innumerable ways whereby a Man may be Cross'd even when he seems most secure of what he fancies would make him Happy, the Scenes of the World Change so fast, and the Foul Days in his Calendar have such quick returns, that in all probability a Man cannot live very long without meeting with some of them. 'Tis much, if in a great while he does not Feel or See some sad Event or other, 'tis much if he does not Suffer either in his own Person, or else in his Friends and Relations, unless he live so tediously long as to have none, but to be Friendless and Desolate in a wide and ill-natured World, and by that time I think his *Days of Rejoycing* will be pretty well over, and that he may be weary of the World, if the World be not of him.

By this it seems highly improbable that a Man should live many Years and Rejoyce in them all. But

But suppose he should, suppose the Current of his long Life should run Clear and Fine to the last, and that by a rare and indulgent Providence he should pass over his flow Stage smoothly and pleasantly, without meeting with the least rub in his way, any thing that may interrupt the Course of his Prosperity, or diminish his Sense of it. Suppose in a Word that God should empty his *Left* hand upon him, Bless him with all Worldly Happiness, and with Days too wherein to enjoy the sweet of it, yet let him remember the *Days of Darkness*. Let him remember that all this Happiness, as Great and as long-lived as it is, must come to an End, that this Fair Sun must Set, and this long Day be follow'd with a much longer Night, that Death shall put an End to all, and that then his Confinement to Darkness shall outlast his Enjoyment of the Light, and he shall lye longer under the Ground, than he has lived and walke upon it. Let him remember the *Days of Darkness*, for they shall be many.

But then for fear he should *Forget* them, because he looks upon them as a great way off, the Wise Man presents him in the mean while with something of a nearer Consideration, and more present Concernment, and that is, that constant *Succession of Vanity* which is in Human Life, that all that is to come of it shall be no more to his Satisfaction than what he has seen and enjoy'd of it already, and that his Future Expectations shall prove every whit as vain and uncontenting as his past Fruitions, and that therefore as a long Life is not Ordinarily to be hoped for, so even by those that have it, 'tis not much to be valued or reckon'd upon, but that something more Lasting and Satisfying is to be sought after: For, *All that cometh is Vanity.*

T H E R E

THE are some Truths which Men want to have Prov'd and Explain'd to them in a *Rational* way, because they are wholly Ignorant of them, or at least do not clearly and fully understand them. And there are others again which they do understand well enough whenever they are pleas'd to Consider and Reflect upon them ; but the Fault and the Unhappiness is, that they seldom or never do so, and accordingly live and order themselves as if they were ignorant of them. Now these Truths need not so much to be *Demonstrated* as *Illustrated*, and set in a Fair and Advantageous Light, where they may meet and strike the Drowsy and Unattentive Eye, which needs no other assistance towards the Sight of such Objects, than only to be directed to them. Of this latter Order of Truths I take that of the Text under Consideration to be, and accordingly I intend,

FIRST, To give it some Illustration ; and then, SECONDLY, To make some Practical Improvement of it to the most Material Uses of Life.

All that cometh is Vanity, says the inspired Preacher, wherein he directly meets with that gross Cheat and Illusion which Men suffer to pass upon themselves, and which a great many never discover all their Lives long. They will readily own that all that is *past* is Vanity, if 'twere only because it is *past*. They have found it so, and are convinc'd of it by a Thousand Experiments, even by as many as they have made. They have found that the World, like the Prince of it, the Devil, has been a Lyar from the beginning, has always deceiv'd them, and that they never enjoy'd, but were disappointed.

disappointed. And accordingly, there is not a Man of them that would live over his past Years again. And as free will they be to allow you that the *present* is also Vanity. They actually feel it so, are uneasy under it, and for that Reason wish the *present* were *past*. And because it does not pass fast enough, they contrive Arts and Devices to *pass* it away. They not only find that whosoever drinks of these Waters shall thirst again, (as our Saviour's Expression is) but they feel themselves dry, even while they are drinking ; nay, that their very drinking increases their Thirst. They feel an Emptiness and an Hollowness after they have feasted upon the World, and find they have suck'd nothing but Wind from the *Breasts of her Consolation*. They abound, they overflow, nay, they surfeit with excels, and yet they are not pleased, there is something wanting ; they *possess* enough, but they *enjoy* little, and their Souls are empty while their Arms are full. So fatal and unavoidable is the Unhappiness of Man, whether he has the things of this World, or has them not. If he has them not, then he pines and languishes for want of them, and frets with Envy against those that have them. And if he has them, yet the matter is not mended, for then he is troubled at their Vanity, and sighs to see himself so baulk'd and disappointed in them.

THEY will therefore easily be brought to confess that the *past* and *present* are all over Vanity. All the Question is concerning what is to *come*. And tho', since the *past* and *present* were once future, they have all the reason in the World to suspect the same of that part of Lite which remains ; viz. That when it comes to be *present* it will be

as vain as those other Futures were when present or past, yet (so strange and unaccountable is their stupidity) 'tis most certain that they do not. No, on the contrary, 'tho' they need but consult their Memory for the Vanity of their past Life, and their present Sense for the Vanity of what they now enjoy, 'tho' their Life has been all along till now, and is now nothing but Disappointment, yet (such is the Magick that has enchanted them) they cannot forbear fancying that they shall find greater Contentment in that which is *behind*, that their happy Days are yet to come, that they shall one time or other be better pleased and satisfied with their Condition, and that that Happiness which has hitherto been too slippery for their hold, and like a Shadow or a Vapour, has slipt thro' their grasping Arms, shall one Day be confin'd within the Circle of their Embraces. Hence they pass on to *Fictions* and *Suppositions*, projecting Models of Happiness to themselves, and imagining how well 'twould be with them, and how finely they should enjoy themselves, if they were but in such and such Circumstances. Thus they fancy, or rather thus they *Dream*, and in the strength of this weak Imagination, they begin every Day with a fresh Expectation, enter upon new Charges and Labours, as the credulous *Chymist* does in the flattering Search of his *Elixir*, and put forward with a trembling Passion in the Chase of Happiness, which some of them pursue so eagerly, and are for over-taking so very soon, that they quicken their Pace, and are for *living fast* as they call it, 'tho' they overtake nothing by it in the Event but an early Grave, and in a very literal Sense run themselves *out of Breath*.

THIS

THIS is the Sentiment and the Conduct of Men, thus they think, and thus they act, or rather thus they dream, and thus they walk in their Sleep. But if they will hear a Man of more Wisdom and Experience than themselves, he will tell them that *all that cometh is Vanity*. 'Tis so, and they will find it so, one part of Life after another, as fast as it cometh. For indeed as long as it is *coming*, or to *come*, its Vanity does not appear; on the contrary there is nothing thought of then but Content and Satisfaction, nothing but *Elysian* Prospects, Dreams of Happiness, and Landskips of Paradise. For there is a strange Fallacy in *hereafter*, and Distance which lessens Objects to the Eye, magnifies them to the Mind. We are big with the Hopes of that part of Life which is *coming on*, and live Day after Day upon the Fancy of what to morrow will produce, like the Spectators of a Play still in Expectation of the next Scene, but yet when to morrow comes we find it just like yesterday, Vain and without Content, and so will every *to morrow* be when it comes to be to *day*.

But yet this inghanted Sleep hangs still in our Eyes, and we will dream on, and when we have set the Day for such an Enjoyment, we long with as much Impatience for the happy Season as the *Adulterous Eye* does for the slow Twilight, complain of the heavy Progress of Time, and are contriving how to pass the dull *Interim* away that delays our Pleasure, and enviously stands between us and our promised Entertainment. But yet when the long-look'd-for Happiness arrives, we find it quite another thing in the Enjoyment than it was in the *Idea*, that it will not bear the Weight we

lay upon it, that it neither answers our Expectations, nor satisfies our Desires. We find in short that there is nothing in it, and so we are serv'd from day to day, and so shall be as long as we live, even *all the Days of our Vanity*.

'T IS in the Course of Life, as when a Man walks or rides in a *Fog*. In the very place where he moves, the thin subtile Vapour seems as nothing, and is hardly visible, but at some distance from him, it appears of so thick and matty a consistence, that he fancies it would sensibly resist his Touch, and that he could embrace it in his Arms. But yet when he arrives to the design'd place, he finds himself in the thin again, and the *Phantaſtick Solid* is remov'd from him to a further Distance. Just so the Happiness of this Life is always to come, still at some remove from us, never *actual* and *present*. For whenever it is so, it vanishes into a thin nothing, and is lost as soon as found. We think we *shall* be happy, but we never think we *are* so ; and most certain it is we shall never be here of that Opinion ; for *all that cometh is Vanity*. So that in this Sense also as well as in that intended by St. James, what is our Life but a *Vapour*? *James 4. 14.*

MEN commonly think of no other Disappointment but only the not having what they desire, and this in their Language is called not to *succeed*; but if they do indeed thus succeed and accomplish their Wish, they will find another, and if I mistake not, a worse Disappointment, the not *enjoying what they have*, the *Disappointment of Fruition*. I call it a worse Disappointment, for this as well as some other Reasons that might be assign'd, because 'tis so necessary, perpetual and unavoidable.

The

The first sort of Disappointment may be often prevented by wise Management. 'Tis not necessary a Man should always lose his Longing, and miss of what he desires. No, he may sometimes compass his Point, and obtain the thing that he wills. But no Management or Address, no Skill or Contrivance can prevent the second, no, nor any Success neither ; for 'tis with the Success that this Disappointment begins. For no sooner is any thing enjoy'd, no sooner does any of our Reversions of Happiness fall, but 'tis weigh'd in the Ballance and found wanting; *All that cometh is Vanity.*

Thus it has been from the beginning, and thus it will be to the end of Life, every part of which is a Cheat, a Delusion, a Lie, and every Man that lives walks in a *vain Shadow*, in the Fog we were but now speaking of, till his Walk is at an end, and the weary Traveller reposes himself in the Grave. He that is young thinks it a wonderful Happiness to live a great while, but when he has obtain'd his Wish does he find that Satisfaction in it ? And so he that is *poor* and *low* in the World fancies it a kind of *Heaven* to be rich and great ; but when he is so, does he find it such a happy State as he before imagin'd ? Could I then lengthen out my Span to an *Antediluvian* stretch, what should I be the better, or what great matter shou'd I find in it ! 'Twould be a mere nothing, not only when past, but even while present. Besides more *Sins* and more *Disappointments*, I should only repeat the same things over a little oftner, and make more frequent *Turnings* in the same *Circle*. And so for Wealth or Preferment, could I be rich or great I should not find that Light and Lustre in it which now at a distance flashes and sparkles in my Eye, but

but should quickly grow sick of that State my self which perhaps another would still envy in me.

But what if I should become *Wise* and *Knowing*? Why then I should be less pleas'd than ever, both with my self and with the World about me. I should then be less able to bear the Follies and Impertinencies of Conversation, which would strike more disagreeably upon my more delicate Sense, as harsh Sounds do upon a nice and well-tuned Ear ; that which pleases me now would not relish with me then, nay I know not what would, for I should so see thro' the Vanity of every thing, as to take Pleasure in nothing. For when all's done, the Pleasure of this Life is founded upon *Ignorance*, and the Wise Man can find no Paradise here, tho' the Fool can. 'Tis in this respect also as well as in regard of its Transientness, like the Pleasure of a *Dream*, because owing to *Sleep*. And it lasts as long as those Phantastick Pleasures use to do ; that is, till a Man is *awake*, till he recovers the use of his Senses, till his Eyes are open, till he comes to himself, (as 'tis said of the young Prodigal, *Luke 15.*) till he begins to think, reflect and consider, and then it vanishes like a Dream when one is *awake*, as the Psalmist speaks, *Psal. 73.* So that a Man's Wisdom would but awake him from a Golden Dream, rob him of a kind and obliging Error, discover to him his Poverty as well as his Ignorance, and make him see the Falseness of that Coin by its Light, which pass'd well enough with him in the Dark. So true would he find that of the Wise as well as Great King, *In much Wisdom is much Grief, and he that increases Knowledge increases Sorrow.* Our Supposition was here made good, Solomon had Wisdom as well

well as Wealth and Honour, and he found that as vain as the other two ; his Wisdom that discover'd the Vanity of other things, at length discover'd that of it self, even the *Light* it self prov'd to be but a *Shadow*, and so 'tis in every thing else: For, *All that cometh is Vanity.*

AND there is clear and evident Reason for all this. For God having made us for the Enjoyment of himself, has accordingly proportion'd our Capacities to the immense Good of his own Nature; and tho' he has limited every other Sense and Faculty about us, yet he has set no Bounds to our *Desires*, but has given a kind of *Infinity* to our *Wills*, wherein by the way consists the principal part of the Divine Image and Resemblance in us. And therefore 'tis absolutely impossible we should be satisfied with any thing here, let us enjoy what we will, because we shall still desire beyond what we enjoy. 'Tis true indeed upon the same Grounds a Man may be here very *miserable*, because that strong Spring whereby he stands bent for Happiness will make him the more sensible of those Pains and Griefs which are contrary to it; but 'tis impossible that any thing in this World should make him *very happy*.

BUT what then is Life worth at this Rate ? Why truly not much, unless it be in order to a better State hereafter, and as 'tis an Opportunity for it. Nor do I know any great Reason a Man has to desire to live *longer*, unless it be that he may live *better*. But then does not this reflect upon the Goodness of God, that he would place so noble a Creature in such poor Circumstances, in a *barren and dry Land*, where no *Water* is, to quench that fiery Thirst which he has put in his Nature?

No,

No, as Man cannot be very happy here, so neither is it fit he should. For however it might have been with *Adam* if he had continu'd innocent, who perhaps might have had such free and large Communications from God, as would have made a true Paradise of a Garden, and turn'd his Terrestrial State into a kind of Heaven; yet 'tis to be consider'd that we are now Sinners, and as such excluded from having any *Paradise* upon Earth by the same Sentence that cast *Adam* out of his. We are now in a State of *Penance*, as well as in a State of *Tryal* and *Probation*, and therefore must not anticipate our Reward here, but be exercis'd with *Vanity* and *Dissatisfaction*, which is that *sore Travail* that God has laid upon the Sons of *Adam*, who tho' Heirs of *Glory*, and born to Crowns and Scepters in the other World, must yet inherit only *Dreams*, *Shadows*, and *Vanity* in this, wherein *all that cometh is Vanity*. There is no Content to be found in any of the Enjoyments of this World, let a Man's share of it, or state in it be what it will, 'tis all but a *Union of Cyphers*, a *Collection of Nothing*, not worth a Thought, or a Wish, or a Tear; only in Religion and the conscientious Discharge of one's Duty, and the practice of a good Life, (the only place where Men seek not for it) there is some real Content and true Satisfaction to be had, and the more we improve in Goodness, the more happy and comfortable will our Lives be. According to the Observation of the Psalmist, *Psal. 119. I see that all things come to an end, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.* Wherein he is not contradicted, but seconded by his Son *Solomon*, who though he inscribed *Vanity* upon all things else, even upon *Wisdom* and *Knowledge*, yet (which

(which is not a little observable) found none in Religion and the Fear of God ; but on the contrary, recommends these as the final result of all his Reflections upon the Vanity of things, and as the whole of Man, *Eccl. 11. 13.*

AND yet after all, 'tis not all the Reasoning in the World that will effectually convince Men of its Vanity, 'till the *Holy Spirit* of God shall work this Conviction in their Hearts by an inward *Sentiment* exceeding the force of all *Rational Light*. Convinc'd indeed they may be after a sort, they see it by Reason, and find it by Experience. But they are not so convinc'd as to give over expecting and projecting, building Castles in the Air, and making up Fools Paradises to themselves ; not so convinc'd of the Vanity of Life as to lay down their fond dependencies upon what is to come of it, but in the midst of all their Reflections and Experiencies, follow on as keenly upon the World, as if they were ignorant of its Vanity, and never had made Tryal of its Deceits. 'Tis plain therefore that this is only a general and notional Conviction of the World's Vanity, such as swims in the Brain, and floats in the Fancy, such as musing and thoughtful Men form to themselves in a Study, but presently lose and forget again as soon as they come abroad into this bewitching World. But now the *Holy Spirit* gives another sort of Conviction of the World's Vanity, such as is deep, lively, actual and abiding, such as sinks down into the bottom of our Spirits, and from thence as an inner spring actuates and inforces all our outward Motions, such in one word as *Dying Men have*—. But I hasten to the Improvement that may be made of these Considerations to the use of Living. Briefly then,

1. If there be such an universal Vanity diffused through the whole compass of Human Life, so that what comes on will be as little to our Satisfaction as what is gone and past, then this lays a considerable ground to confirm us in the belief and expectation of a *Future State*, it being not worth while for God to bring such noble Creatures into such a vain as well as transitory World, if it were not in order to somewhat further. If God had not intended us for any other State than this, to take a turn or two here, and then sink into our first nothing, he either would not have made us, or else he would have suited our Capacities to the narrow Measure of these Worldly Objects: And therefore since we find our selves so much above them as not possibly to be satisfied with them, may we not hence conclude that this Life is not our final or only State, but that there is another, and a better Life to come.

AGAIN 2. If this present World and Life be so all over Vanity, then we may hence learn the great Folly and Madness of *Sin*. 'Tis certain that no Man sins purely for Sins sake. 'Tis the Consideration of some Pleasure or Advantage or other that induces him to it. *What will ye give me*, said *Judas* to the Chief Priests, *and I will deliver him unto you*. And the same is the Language of every Sinner to those three cursed Traders for Souls, the World, the Flesh and the Devil, *What will ye give me*? Why, *All this will I give thee*, says the last of them, shewing him some of the vain Grandeur or Pleasures of this Transitory Life. He has the unhappy Advantage to come with ready Money in his hand (such stuff as it is) for which the needy and covetous Sinner likes his Chapman, and accordingly deals with him. So that in all Sin there is

is at least an implicit, if not an express Contract, and every Sinner plainly makes a Bargain, selling his *Soul* as really and truly (tho' not always at the same Price) as *Judas* did the *Body* of our Saviour. But alas what a mad foolish Bargain is it ! For what is it that he has in Exchange ? Could the Devil make good his confident Offer in the largest Extent, when he says, *All this will I give thee, yee what is that mighty All ?* What is there in this vain World, tho' a Man could be Master of the whole of it (according to our Saviour's Supposition) that should induce him to do the least Evil, to offend an Infinite God, and hazard a Happy, not to say Miserable Eternity ? *What Fruit*, says the Apostle, *had ye then in those things, Rom. 6. 21.* What Fruit indeed, but the Fruits of Sodom, deceitful Viands, Aery Banquets, Phantastick Food, that is so far from satisfying the Hunger, that it will not so much as indure the Touch. And shall I sell my Soul, my God, my Heaven for this ? So that one may well put that Question of the Psalmist, *Are not they without Understanding that work Wickedness ?* That do such Work for such Wages ? They call themselves indeed Rational Creatures, and some of them pretend more particularly to Reason, and set up for Wits, but have they so much as common Sense or Understanding ? Or rather may not every Sinner more justly lay to the God he has offended in the Words of an humble Penitent, *So foolish was I and ignorant, and even as a Beast before thee.*

AGAIN, 3. If all that cometh be Vanity as well as all that's past, then we have the less reason to fear Death, particularly that which we call an *untimely* one, and none at all to reckon upon the

the Pleasures of a long Life. The less reason to fear Death, because the World it takes us from is so very vain and little worth. And none to reckon upon the Pleasures of a long Life, because these Pleasures are only in the Imagination, such as those who die early think they lose, but those who live longer do not find. For we do not advance in Happiness as we do in Years, especially if we grow wiser with our Age, but tread the same fairy-ring, and find nothing more in our latter than in our former Rounds, except only greater Toil and Weariness. Tho' therefore a Man should live many Years, yet let him remember not only the Days of *Darkness*, but the Days of *Light* too ; For, *All that cometh is Vanity*.

AGAIN, 4. and Lastly, From the Consideration of that constantly successive Vanity, which as a Shadow, always attends and keeps pace with this present Life, we may be further instructed to make the more careful Provision for another, to seek out for something more lasting and satisfying, a better and a more induring Substance, even that *Inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us*. Considering what a sad thing it would be first to walk all our Lives in a vain Shadow, and then to lie down in Sorrow, to have *Vanity* for our Portion here, and eternal *Misery* hereafter. The former we cannot avoid, but we may the latter ; and that we may all have the Wisdom to do so, God of his infinite Mercy grant through Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be all Glory and Thanksgiving for ever. *Amen.*

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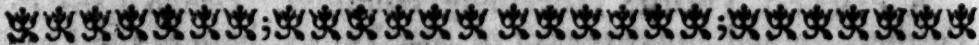
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